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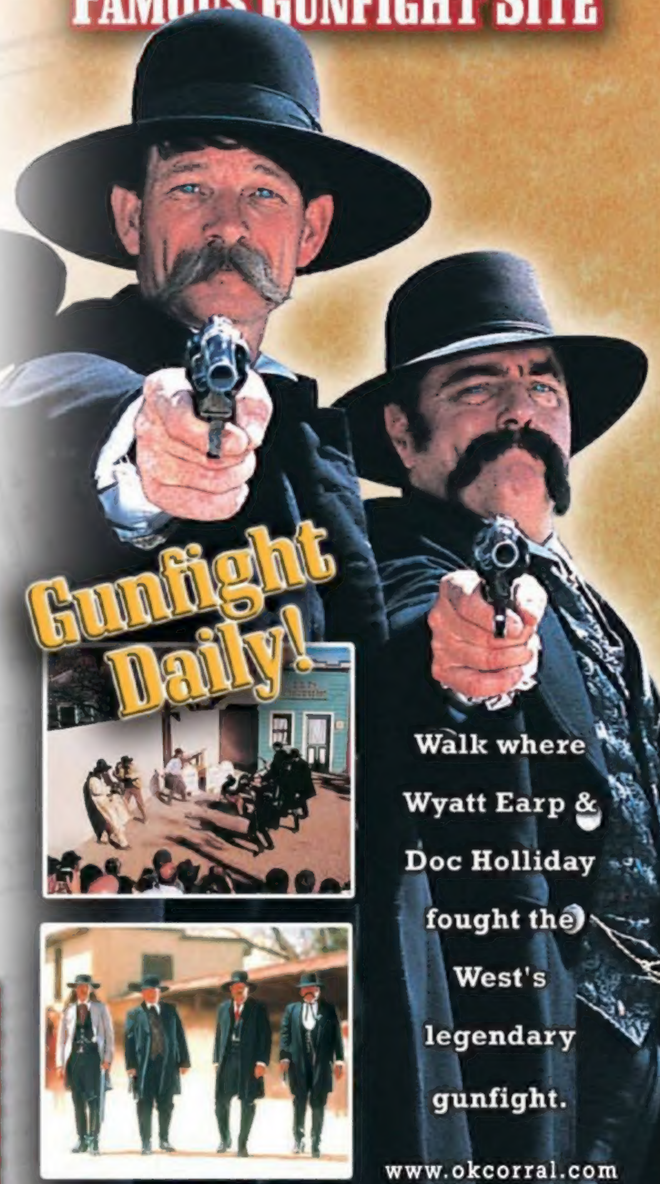

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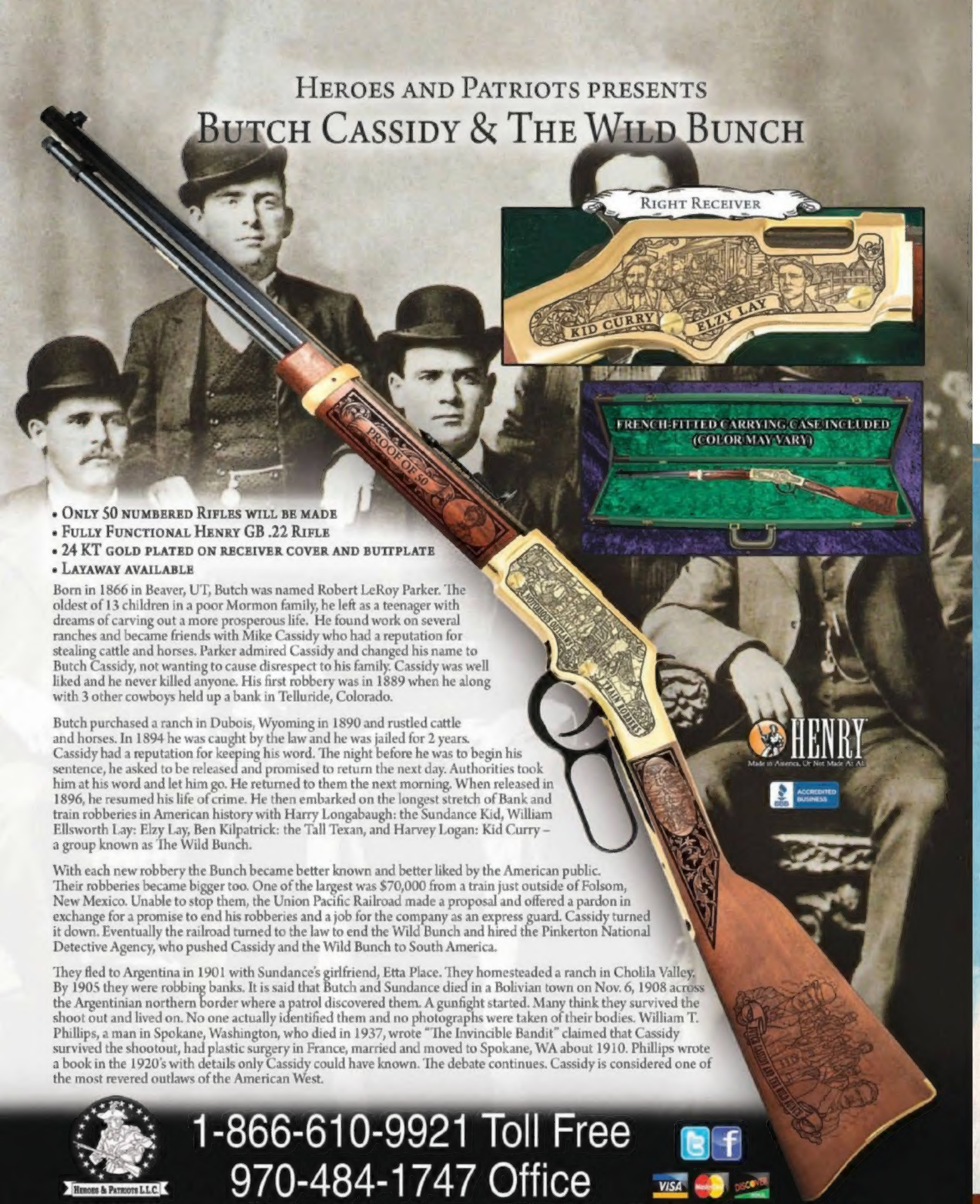
BUTCH CASSIDY & THE WILD BUNCH



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Born in 1866 in Beaver, UT, Butch was named Robert LeRoy Parker. The oldest of 13 children in a poor Mormon family, he left as a teenager with dreams of carving out a more prosperous life. He found work on several ranches and became friends with Mike Cassidy who had a reputation for stealing cattle and horses. Parker admired Cassidy and changed his name to Butch Cassidy, not wanting to cause disrespect to his family. Cassidy was well liked and he never killed anyone. His first robbery was in 1889 when he along with 3 other cowboys held up a bank in Telluride, Colorado.

Butch purchased a ranch in Dubois, Wyoming in 1890 and rustled cattle and horses. In 1894 he was caught by the law and he was jailed for 2 years. Cassidy had a reputation for keeping his word. The night before he was to begin his sentence, he asked to be released and promised to return the next day. Authorities took him at his word and let him go. He returned to them the next morning. When released in 1896, he resumed his life of crime. He then embarked on the longest stretch of Bank and train robberies in American history with Harry Longabaugh: the Sundance Kid, William Ellsworth Lay: Elzy Lay, Ben Kilpatrick: the Tall Texan, and Harvey Logan: Kid Curry – a group known as The Wild Bunch.

With each new robbery the Bunch became better known and better liked by the American public. Their robberies became bigger too. One of the largest was $70,000 from a train just outside of Folsom, New Mexico. Unable to stop them, the Union Pacific Railroad made a proposal and offered a pardon in exchange for a promise to end his robberies and a job for the company as an express guard. Cassidy turned it down. Eventually the railroad turned to the law to end the Wild Bunch and hired the Pinkerton National Detective Agency, who pushed Cassidy and the Wild Bunch to South America.

They fled to Argentina in 1901 with Sundance's girlfriend, Etta Place. They homesteaded a ranch in Cholila Valley. By 1905 they were robbing banks. It is said that Butch and Sundance died in a Bolivian town on Nov. 6, 1908 across the Argentinian northern border where a patrol discovered them. A gunfight started. Many think they survived the shoot out and lived on. No one actually identified them and no photographs were taken of their bodies. William T. Phillips, a man in Spokane, Washington, who died in 1937, wrote "The Invincible Bandit" claimed that Cassidy survived the shootout, had plastic surgery in France, married and moved to Spokane, WA about 1910. Phillips wrote a book in the 1920's with details only Cassidy could have known. The debate continues. Cassidy is considered one of the most revered outlaws of the American West.

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Gold Camp Express

In 1902, the mud-wagon style stagecoach (at left, and inset) was the primary public transportation between Tonopah and the emerging gold camp of Goldfield in southwestern Nevada. By 1905, the Tonopah and Goldfield Railroad supplanted the stage service between the two mining towns.

– PHOTOS COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

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HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

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September 2019 Vol. 66, #9, Whole #596. *True West* (ISSN 0041-3615) is published twelve times a year (January, February, March, April, May, June, July, August, September, October, November, December) by *True West* Publishing, Inc., 6702 E. Cave Creek Rd, Suite #5 Cave Creek, AZ 85331. 480-575-1881. Periodical postage paid at Cave Creek, AZ 85327, and at additional mailing offices. Canadian GST Registration Number R132182866.

Single copies: $5.99. U.S. subscription rate is $29.95 per year (12 issues); $49.95 for two years (24 issues).

POSTMASTER: Please send address change to: *True West*, P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327. Printed in the United States of America. Copyright 2018 by *True West* Publishing, Inc.

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Fame, Fortune and a Snowball's Chance in Hell

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– COURTESY CBS TELEVISION –

I prefer the radio version of the show [*Have Gun, Will Travel*, CBS]. The TV version [starring Richard Boone as Paladin (left)] actually preceded the radio version! The shows were similar, but John Dehner, the star of the radio show had a certain classiness to his voice that made it an excellent role for him.

–Jeff Foreman, *Denver, Colorado*

Go behind the scenes of *True West* with Bob Boze Bell to see his painting, *The Mysterious Ringo*, and more of the executive editor's Daily Whipouts. (Search for June 19, 2019.)

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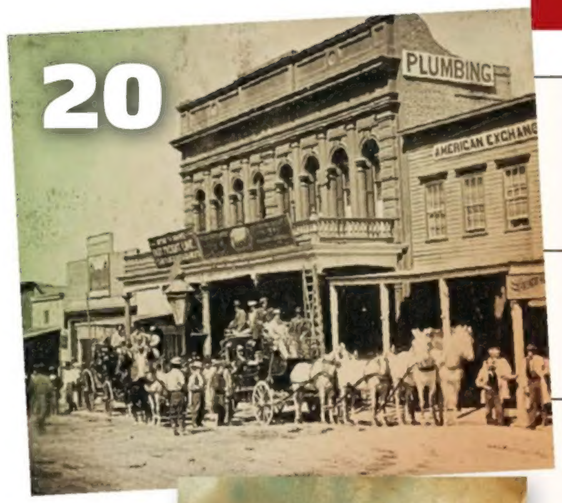
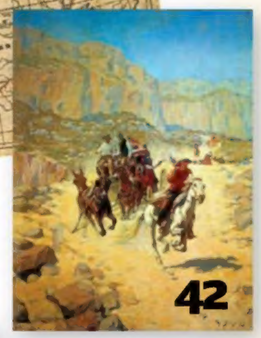
8	OPENING SHOT	52	RENEGADE ROADS
12	TRUTH BE KNOWN	56	WESTERN BOOKS
13	TO THE POINT	60	WESTERN MOVIES
14	SHOOTING BACK	69	TRUE WESTERN TOWNS
16	OLD WEST SAVIORS	93	WESTERN ROUNDUP
18	COLLECTING THE WEST	94	ASK THE MARSHALL
46	CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS	96	WHAT HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME
50	UNSUNG		





Johnny Ringo at the Bar by Bob Boze Bell
Cover Design by Dan Harshberger

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

SEPTEMBER 2019 – VOLUME 66 – ISSUE 9

20 SHOTGUNS AND OUTLAWS
Wells Fargo's shotgun messenger Mike Tovey was among the bravest of them all.
—By John Boessenecker

28 DEATH OF A COWBOY, THE BIRTH OF A LEGEND
What really happened during the final, fateful days of John Ringo?
—By David Johnson

36 BUTTERFIELD'S GRAND ADVENTURE
"Remember Boys, Nothing on God's Earth Should Stop the United States Mail."
—By Melody Groves

42 SURVIVING THE RIDE ON THE JACKASS MAIL
Crossing the desert proved an ordeal passengers could never forget.
—By Gerald T. Ahnert

72 TRADITIONS OF THE WEST
Discover the best of our collective Western culture in the exhibits at the top museums of 2019.
—By Candy Moulton

86 WESTERN ART MUSEUMS OF THE YEAR
In large and small institutions, curators create magic through creativity and imagination in the West's best gallery exhibitions.
—By Johnny D. Boggs

COMPILED BY ROBERT RAY

Old Vaquero Saying

"Courage is knowing it might hurt and saddling up anyway. Stupidity is the same thing. This is why life is so hard."

Quotes

"You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do."

– Henry Ford

"The glory of great men should always be measured by the means they have used to acquire it."

– François de La Rochefoucauld

"Some people make headlines while others make history."

– Philip Elmer-DeWitt

"Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better."

– King Whitney Jr.

"Nearly all men can stand adversity, but if you want to test a man's character, give him power."

– Abraham Lincoln

"The arc of history bends toward delusion."

–Stephen Kotkin

"Where facts are few, experts are many."

–Donald R. Gannon

"Letting your customers set your standards is a dangerous game, because the race to the bottom is pretty easy to win. Setting your own standards—and living up to them—is a better way to profit. Not to mention a better way to make your day worth all the effort you put into it."

– Seth Godin

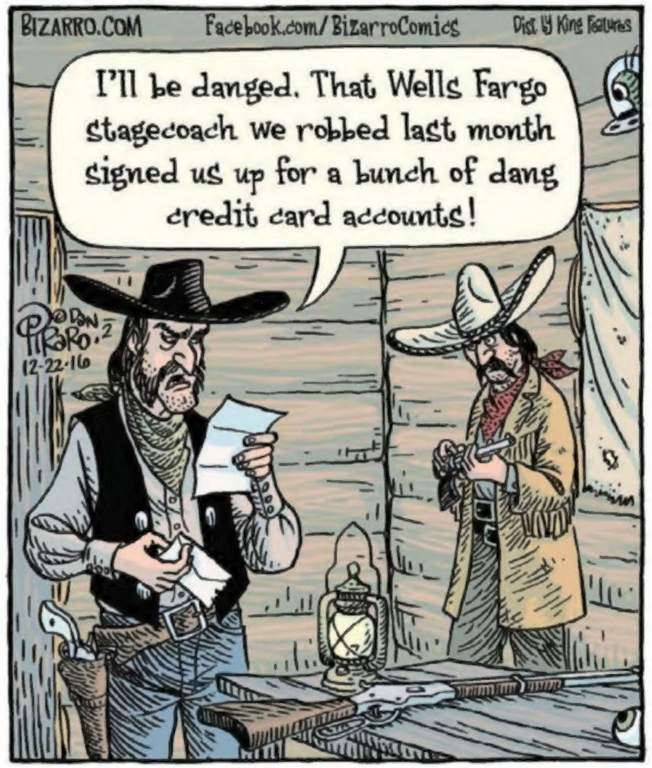
"There are two ways to slide easily through life; to believe everything or to doubt everything. Both ways save us from thinking."

– Alfred Korzybski

"Men fear thought as they fear nothing else on earth—more than ruin—more even than death.... Thought is subversive and revolutionary, destructive and terrible, thought is merciless to privilege, established institutions and comfortable habit. Thought looks into the pit of hell and is not afraid. Thought is great and swift and free, the light of the world, and the chief glory of man."

– Bertrand Russell

Bizarro BY DAN PIRARO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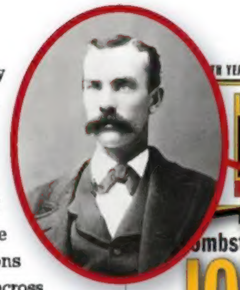
I'll be danged. That Wells Fargo stagecoach we robbed last month signed us up for a bunch of dang credit card accounts!
DAN PIRARO 12-22-16

BY BOB BOZE BELL

Right As Ringo

When deepfake meets artistic license.



The problem with the only known photo of John Ringo is that he looks like a banker. The real Johnny Ringo (as he perhaps was never called) was known as the King of The Cowboys, and possibly the defacto leader of the Clantons and McLaury Cow-boy faction across Cochise County in the early 1880s.

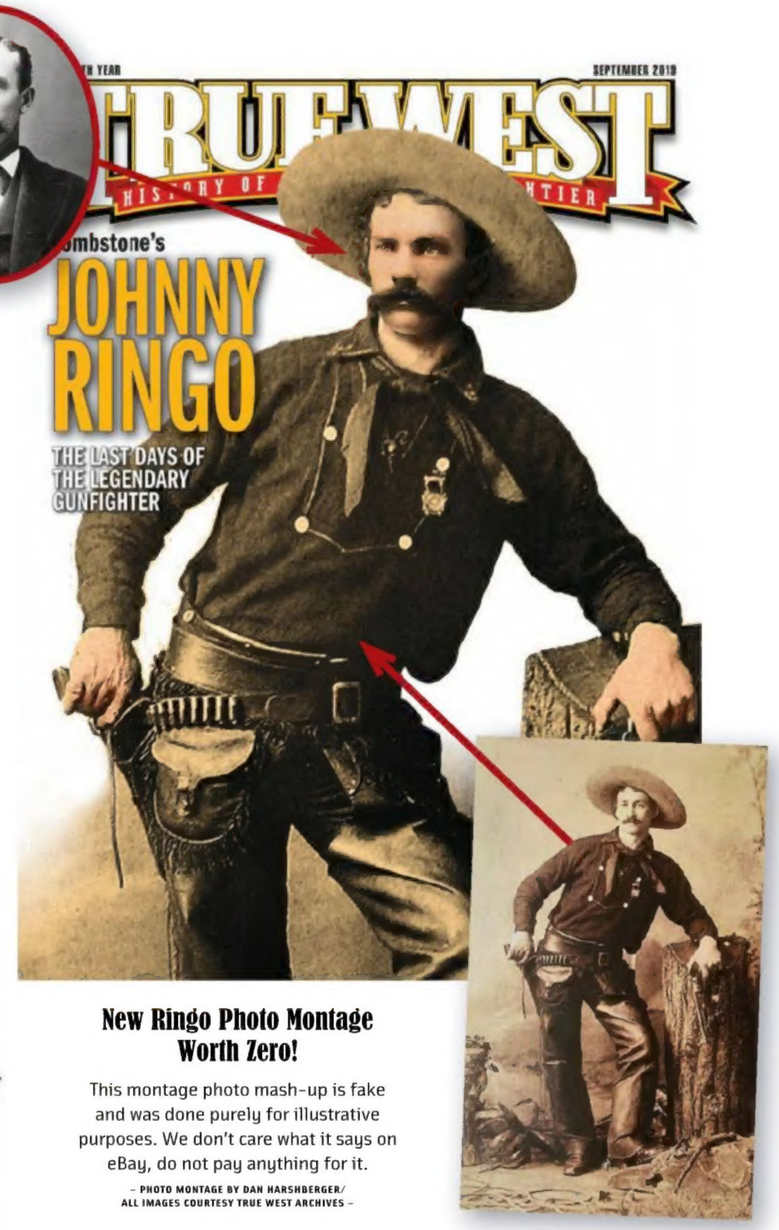
So, how do we illustrate that discrepancy on the cover of *True West* magazine? The most convincing way would be to "marry" Ringo's face to a photograph of a period cowboy (see, at right). Art Director Dan "The Man" Harshberger did a superb job of doing just that, but our editor, Stuart Rosebrook, is appalled with this because, as he puts it, "it's ultimately a fake photo."

My position is that it's an illustration or depiction of what he may have looked like. You know, as in "artistic license"?

So I asked our Historical Consultant, Paul Andrew Hutton, to weigh in and here is what he said: "Considering the current controversy over Old West photographs, the use of any photoshopped image on your cover is really calling in an air strike on your own position. A painting or a movie image are quite different from an altered image, no matter how clear you make what you are doing. It will turn up on eBay as 'newly discovered' and worth $50k on 'buy it now.' Sorry that the real image of Ringo is such a dud-spud."

Okay, fine. We'll go with a painting. Still, you have to admit, it's kind of cool.

For a behind-the-scenes look at running this magazine, check out BBB's daily blog at TWMag.com



New Ringo Photo Montage Worth Zero!

This montage photo mash-up is fake and was done purely for illustrative purposes. We don't care what it says on eBay, do not pay anything for it.

– PHOTO MONTAGE BY DAN HARSHBERGER/ ALL IMAGES COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

"I'M PUZZLED, PERPLEXED AND BEWILDERED AS TO WHY BILLY THE KID IS PORTRAYED AS AFRICAN AMERICAN ON YOUR JULY COVER."

–Dan Katz

BILLY THE KID: AFRICAN AMERICAN ICON?

Though I sure understand America's push toward "political correctness," "inclusion" and "diversity," I'm puzzled, perplexed and bewildered as to why Billy the Kid is portrayed as African American on your July cover.

Dan Katz
Westport, Connecticut

I must commend your vivid imagination for seeing race where none was intended. I didn't paint my Billy cover portrait to make him look like an African American, and I'm a little puzzled how you got there as well.

Bob Boze Bell, executive editor

BILLY THE KID IN GOTHAM CITY

– ALL IMAGES COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

Noticing the rather scary expression on Billy's face on the July cover, I can easily see some science-fiction writer transporting and releasing him to clean up New York City at its crime height in the late 70s!

Mike Colaizzi
Gold Canyon, Arizona

HICKOK'S MISSING GUNFIGHT

I think your *True West* readers were led down a dead-end historical road [in the April 2019 issue] when you endorsed Tom Clavin's book, *Wild Bill*, as one that will withstand the endurance of time by keeping the legend of Hickok alive for another generation. How can he miss what is arguably Hickok's most significant brawl of all his brawls in which he killed 24-year-old John Kile in Hays, Kansas, on July 17, 1870?

Jeff Broome, Ph.D.
Beulah, Colorado

Dr. Jeff Broome, a well-published Western historian, who has done groundbreaking primary research on Wild Bill Hickok's killing of John Kile, is correct, and the Kile killing was not included by Clavin in his *Wild Bill* biography. My hope is that we can work with Dr. Broome to publish the story of the Hickok vs. Kile gunfight in a future issue of *True West*.

Stuart Rosebrook, editor

THE APACHE KID

The photo on pages 27-28 in Frank Puncer's "Edgar Rice Burroughs Hunted the Apache Kid" article in the July 2019 issue was taken sometime after 1885, given the new five-button blouse, and the canvas leggings worn by a few of the scouts were not issued before that time. Also, the figure on the far right appears to be Cut Mouth Mose and to his right the Yavapai Medal of Honor recipient Rowdy.

John Langellier, Ph.D.
Tucson, Arizona

CORRECTION

On page 40 of the July 2019 issue, the following paragraph was inadvertently left out of Mark Lee Gardner's article, "Billy the Tintype." It should have appeared before the paragraph that begins "Not to worry....":

"Once the Billy CDV was published, other authors made use of that version of the Kid for their own books and articles, until the Dedrick tintype surfaced decades later. Walter Noble Burns, whose hugely popular *The Saga of Billy the Kid* (1926) made the young outlaw immortal, commissioned an illustration of Billy based on either an original Billy CDV or, more probably, the CDV version as published in 1907. Burns's illustration is a heavily touched-up halftone that is one of the more attractive interpretations of the original tintype. However, Burns's publisher, Doubleday, Page & Company, opted not to use any of the images Burns submitted for his book, explaining that they preferred to let his readers use their imaginations."

The missing paragraph has been restored to the online version of the article, which can be enjoyed at *TrueWestMagazine.com/billy-the-tintype*.

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BY JANA BOMMERSBACH

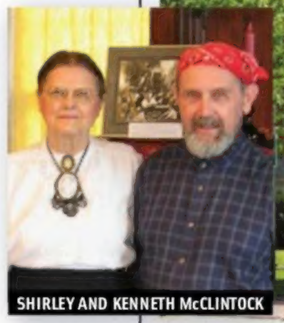
Stone by Stone

Shirley McClintock has dedicated her life to preserving the history of Council Grove, Kansas.

"No, no, no, no!" That's what they told Shirley McClintock when she asked her neighbors to save an old building along the Santa Fe Trail in Council Grove, Kansas.

"Don't take this on because I won't help you." That's what husband Kenneth told her.

But what she was told and what she heard were two different things. What she heard was: "Shirley, you have to do it yourself—don't worry, they'll fall in line."



SHIRLEY AND KENNETH McCLINTOCK

And they did. That's how a dump of a place was saved in 1994 and discovered to be a beautiful 1861 stone building—perhaps the oldest stone house still standing along the historic trail.

It's hard today to think of this lovely1861 Santa Fe Trail stone-building in Council Grove, Kansas, as a ruin about to be bulldozed, but that's only because one tenacious woman and a loving community wouldn't let that happen.

– PHOTOS COURTESY SHIRLEY MCCLINTOCK –

"I was like the Lone Ranger," Shirley says today, speaking from what is now the Trail Days Cafe and Museum—serving food that represents everyone who's lived on this dirt, from American Indians to German immigrants to Swedish farmers.

There was just something about this place that spoke to her. She couldn't stand the thought that the abandoned building—a gas station for 50 years—was about to be bulldozed to make room for trailer houses. Maybe it spoke to her when walked around the place and realized that under all the paint and mortar that camouflaged its natural beauty was a stone house. Or maybe it was the day she found the Indian pictograph on a doorjamb. Whatever it was, she knew this was something historic and her town would be a loser if they lost it.

When she couldn't find anyone to buy it outright, she asked for help raising the down payment, and lots of friends chipped in. Then the angels smiled and the estate of retired schoolteacher Hazel Torgeson was left to the Historic Preservation Corporation that Shirley and Kenneth created in 1994. (Yes, he's up to his neck in this too.) The estate helped tons. So did the musicals Shirley created and staged at the local theater, often making the costumes herself for singers who were accompanied by a big screen slide show. She drew between 250 and 450 patrons in a place where those numbers mean something special is happening. When even that didn't raise enough, Shirley learned to write grants.

> "Shirley, you have to do it yourself—don't worry, they'll fall in line."

All in all, she not only saved the stone building and then made it a cafe to benefit the restoration corporation, but also surrounded it with other projects, including a 1902 one-room schoolhouse and a 1930s tourist cabin. Lots more is in the works, including an 1858 two-story log home that has had a barn built around it to protect it, and a 1947 grocery store that will become a multipurpose auditorium.

Because one thing is perfectly clear: Shirley McClintock gives no indication she's done saving pieces of Kansas's history. ★

Jana Bommersbach has earned recognition as Arizona's Journalist of the Year and won an Emmy and two Lifetime Achievement Awards. She cowrote the Emmy-winning *Outrageous Arizona* and has written two true crime books, a children's book and the historical novel *Cattle Kate*.

11TH ANNUAL GRAND CANYON
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Cody DeLong
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Linda Glover Gooch
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1919-2019 GRAND CANYON NATIONAL PARK CENTENNIAL

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BY JOHN LANGELLIER

Western Art Reached the Top Tier

The works of several Old West artists sold at high premium at the Heritage Auction.

Frank Earle Schoonover's *Skinny dragged him over to a crack and settled down for another try*, a 30-x 20-inch oil on canvas, sold for $100,000.

– ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF HERITAGE AUCTIONS, DALLAS, TEXAS UNLESS OTHERWISE INDICATED. ALL PRICES INCLUDE BUYERS PREMIUM –

Frank Earle Schoonover's *He swing his rifle out over a forked limb and let it settle in the crotch,* a 36-x-24-inch oil on canvas, sold for $68,750.

Heritage Auction's May 3, 2019, sale of American art included a wide array of subjects, artists and styles. Some 665 bidders vied for the 201 lots sold, which at the conclusion brought a significant total of $7,301,125, including buyer's premiums.

Several dozen Western-themed pieces were offered. In fact, two of the paintings ranked in the top twenty moneymakers, both by Frank Earle Schoonover. During his long, productive career, New Jersey-born Schoonover (August 19, 1877-September 1, 1972) created over 3,000 works, many of which served as covers or interior illustrations for books and magazines. For certain Western aficionados, his renderings to accompany Clarence Mulford's outpouring of Hopalong Cassidy tales stand out as most memorable.

Indeed, Lot 68084, which sold for $100,000 (all prices realized include buyer's premiums), appeared in one of Mulford's *Bar-20* yarns, in this case for the April 1906 issue of *The Outing Magazine*. Similarly, *He swing his rifle out over a forked limb and let it settle in the crotch* also was seen in *The Outing Magazine*, in this case the May 1907 issue as part VIII of Hoppy's escapades in "Roping a Rustler."

Another Mulford story came to life under the masterful hand of Maynard Dixon. His *The Fugitive's Horse Plunged into the Deep Water*, which was an interior for the 1911 edition of *Bar-20 Days*, brought $52,500. Of course, not all the top sellers were Mulford related. An array of other cowboy images, American Indians, and even an Albert Bierstadt depiction of Spanish colonial settlement of California could be found among some of the top bids. ■

John Langellier's most recent book, *"Trapdoor" Springfield*, was released last summer by Osprey of London. He currently is completing his next book, *Scouting with the Buffalo Soldiers: Lieutenant Powhatan Clarke, Frederic Remington and the Tenth U.S. Cavalry in the West.*

Henry Farny's *Indian Chief*, a 8 ½-x-5 ⅝-inch gouache and watercolor on paper, sold for $52,500.

Paul Pletka's *Los Fariseos,* a 60-x-60 inch acrylic on canvas, sold for $37,500.

Maynard Dixon's *The Fugitive's Horse Plunged into the Deep Water,* a 29 ¾-x-21 ⅝-inch gouache, charcoal and watercolor on paper, sold for $52,500.

Fritz Scholder's *Untitled,* a 93-inch bronze with greenish-brown patina, sold for $35,000.

Albert Bierstadt's *Study for Entrance into Monterey* (circa 1875), a 13 ½-x-18 ½-inch oil-on-paper laid-on-board, sold for $35,000.

Olaf Wieghorst's *Cantina,* a 16-x-20-inch oil on canvas, sold for $21,250.

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BY JOHN BOESSENECKER

Shotguns and Outlaws

Wells Fargo's shotgun messenger Mike Tovey was among the bravest of them all.

Wells Fargo & Company's Express was one of the most important businesses on the Western frontier. The company began as a local mail delivery service during the California Gold Rush in 1852, a time when the U.S. Post Office was all but nonexistent in the mining camps. Because Wells Fargo was safe and, unlike the Post Office, made all losses good, it grew rapidly throughout the West, connecting towns big and small, and eventually became the country's largest express carrier. Robbers followed the money, and during the late 1850s stagecoach holdups became increasingly common in California. Wells Fargo began hiring armed guards, later called "shotgun messengers," to accompany treasure shipments. Contrary to popular belief, they did not guard stagecoaches; they protected Wells Fargo's strongboxes. And the title "shotgun messenger" did not come into popular use until the 1870s. Such terms as "riding shotgun" and "shotgun rider" were invented by 20th-century novelists and were unknown in the Old West.

Wells Fargo shotgun messenger Mike Tovey served the express company from 1871 to 1893. He protected shipments in all seasons across the West. In the winter, Tovey would have worn a bearskin coat (above) that was typical winter wear for stage drivers and messengers.

– COURTESY JOHN BOESSENECKER COLLECTION –

Wells Fargo shotgun messengers regularly protected the company's express boxes on the stage lines that ran to and from the Comstock Lode mining headquarters in Virginia City, Nevada.

– COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS –

Wells Fargo's shotgun messengers (above) did not guard stages; they protected the company's express boxes. Armed with double-barreled shotguns and revolvers, messengers started guarding Wells Fargo's shipments in California in the mid-1850s.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

By the mid 1870s the company had 35 shotgun messengers. That number grew to 110 in the early 1880s, and then 200 by 1885. By 1918 the company employed 3,000 shotgun guards, mostly on railroads. Every Wells Fargo railcar had at least one armed messenger, and often a messenger's helper. Of these guards, Wells Fargo's chief detective James B. Hume explained, "In all my experience, there has never been an occasion when a regular shotgun messenger showed the white feather no matter what the odds against him or the promise of danger might be. They are the kind of men you can depend on if you get in a fix, with the certainty that they will pull you through or stay by you to the last."

The shotgun messengers who rode for Wells Fargo in the Wild West were expected to risk their lives to protect the company's treasure boxes. Their work was dangerous. Between 1855 and 1915, at least 53 Wells Fargo expressmen—most of them messengers—died in the line of duty. Nineteen were slain by outlaws or bandits, four were accidentally shot, four more died in shipwrecks and steamboat explosions, and many of the others perished in train wrecks. But few of them took as many risks as Mike Tovey.

A Man of True Grit

Born in Canada in 1842, Tovey immigrated with his family to the American Midwest when he was six. During the Civil War his twin brother, Peter, enlisted in the Union Army, while Mike drifted west and became a pony rider for Ben Holladay's Overland Mail & Express Company. This perilous work brought him to the attention of Wells Fargo, and in 1871 he signed on as a shotgun messenger on the bandit-infested stage road from the Union Pacific railhead at Corinne, Utah Territory, to Helena, Montana Territory. Mike Tovey quickly exhibited a fearlessness that matched his powerful physique: he stood more than six feet tall and weighed 200 pounds. As one of his stage driver friends recalled, "Brave men don't talk much, and Tovey would rather sit and tell you a funny story than blow about himself."

From 1873 to 1904, James B. Hume served faithfully as Wells Fargo's chief special officer. He hired Mike Tovey and regularly assigned him to the most dangerous routes in Montana, Utah, Nevada and California.

– COURTESY JOHN BOESSENECKER COLLECTION –

In 1875 Wells Fargo officials sent Tovey to Nevada to guard the company's express boxes on the stage routes from Virginia City to Pioche, and between Carson City, Nevada, and the rowdy mining town of Bodie, California. Mike was on that route on September 4, 1880, when he found himself walking in front of his stage in the blackness. His flickering lantern lit up the outlines of footprints in the middle of the dusty stage road. Three hours earlier, a coach had been held up on the same highway, and Tovey suspected that the bandits might be lying in wait somewhere ahead of him. He walked back to the stagecoach, climbed onto the driver's box, and rested his sawed-off shotgun across his knees. If the outlaws wanted a fight, he was ready for them.

It was 3:00 a.m. when the heavy stage rumbled into Sweetwater Summit, an isolated spot 6,800 feet high in Nevada's Sweetwater Mountains, about 40 miles north of Bodie. Once again the alert Wells Fargo man spotted footprints in the light of the coach's headlamps. He got down with his lantern to inspect them, then climbed aboard. Tovey sat next to the driver, with a stage line agent, H.A. Billings, next to them. There had been so many holdups on the highway between Bodie and Carson City that a second Wells Fargo shotgun messenger, Tom Woodruff, rode inside with the passengers.

The stage continued on a short distance when Tovey again saw the bootprints. He swung down and walked forward, inspecting the tracks, as the stage followed slowly behind him. Suddenly a voice rang out from the blackness, "You son of a bitch, you thought you'd sneak up on us, did you?"

Mike Tovey had no way of knowing that the voice belonged to William C. Jones, alias Frank Dow, an ex-convict. He and his partner, Milt Sharp, had been on a terrific spree of stage robbery for the past four months. They had held up seven stagecoaches in California and Nevada, two of them in the last few days. The pair had met the prior winter on a sheep ranch in the Sierra Nevada foothills of Placer County, California. Sharp, born in Missouri in 1846, had led an honest life, coming west in 1866 and working as a miner in California and Nevada. Although he was a gentleman who did not smoke or drink, Sharp had lost all his earnings gambling in risky mining stocks. Jones convinced him they could make a haul by robbing stages.

Now Tovey, hearing Jones's shout, pretended to be afraid. "Don't shoot," he cried. "I'll go back and get the box."

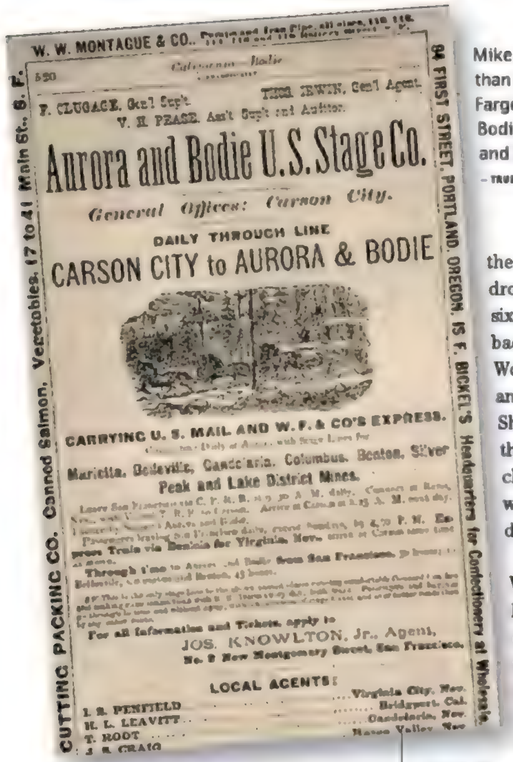
"Go back, you whelp, and if you make a move we'll murder every mother's son of you," snarled Jones, who then raised his rifle

Wells Fargo detective Henry N. "Harry" Morse captured Sonora and Milton Stage robber Charles E. Boles, a.k.a. Black Bart. It is not known if Morse earned the $250 reward.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

Wells Fargo leadership knew Mike Tovey could handle any job they assigned him and moved him around to handle messenger service on dangerous stage routes. In 1871, Tovey guarded the Wells Fargo express cargo between Corinne, Utah Territory (above), and Helena, Montana Territory.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –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Mike Tovey had to fight off outlaws on more than one occasion while riding as a Wells Fargo shotgun messenger on the Aurora and Bodie U.S. Stage Co. to and from Carson City and Bodie.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

and fired twice. The first bullet whined by Tovey and struck one of the lead horses in the head, killing the animal instantly. The second passed between the driver and Billings. Tovey dove for cover under the coach, then whispered to Billings, "Hand down that gun."

Billings tossed him his shotgun and jumped down from the box. Tovey and Billings, joined by Woodruff, took cover behind the stage. At that, Jones yelled, "If you fellows fire a gun, we will murder every son of a bitch of you!"

"Nobody is firing any guns," Tovey called back, as he cocked the hammers of his shotgun. "What's the matter with you? If you want anything, come along."

Jones then stepped forward into the light of the headlamps. Tovey called in a loud voice to the driver, "Throw down the box, quick, and let's get out of this!"

At the same time he crouched and rested the barrel of his shotgun on top of the rear wheel. Just as Jones passed the body of the fallen leader, Tovey fired one barrel. The heavy load of buckshot tore into Jones's face and neck, killing him instantly. Milt Sharp, armed with a six-shooter, opened fire and Tovey staggered as a bullet tore into his right arm, shattering the bone below the elbow. He dropped his shotgun, drew his six-gun with his left hand, and fired back. By this time Billings and Woodruff got their guns into play and sent a volley of shots toward Sharp. They saw him stagger and thought they hit him. Woodruff chased after Sharp into a stand of willow trees but lost him in the dark and ran back to the stage.

Tovey was bleeding heavily so Woodruff and Billings carried him to a house a short distance down the road, while the unarmed reinsman calmed his team and unhitched the dead horse. Suddenly he heard a voice say, "Throw down the box." Sharp had returned to finish the robbery. The driver tossed down the Wells Fargo box and Sharp quickly chopped it open with a hatchet and took out $750 in cash. The bandit could not see Jones's body, because it lay under the team, and asked which way his partner had gone. The driver, fearing for his life, said he didn't know. Sharp, his gun in one hand and his loot in the other, vanished into the darkness as he continually called out, "Partner, where are you?"

Mike Tovey was loaded into a buggy for the jolting, 60-mile trip to Carson City where his wound was treated. Soon he was up and about, his arm heavily bandaged. Meanwhile Wells Fargo detectives searched Jones's body and found a bank book in his pockets with his name and a San Francisco address. Police detectives staked out the boardinghouse where they soon captured Milt Sharp, who was sentenced to 20 years in the Nevada state prison. Mike Tovey's action in the holdup had been emblematic of Wells Fargo's reputation for safety and security on the American frontier.

The Last Ride

Over the years, Tovey was dispatched to wherever Wells Fargo needed an experienced messenger: to Utah, Montana, Arizona, and finally back to Nevada. In 1884, at Hawthorne, Nevada, he was shot and wounded by Bill Withrow, a gunfighter and former Wells Fargo messenger whom Tovey had accused of complicity in a stage holdup.

In 1887 Mike Tovey was ordered to California where he rode the stage routes of Amador and Calaveras counties in the Sierra Nevada foothills. Two years later Milt Sharp fled the Nevada state prison. Following his escape, Wells Fargo officials received a letter, purportedly written by Sharp, warning them to retire Tovey or he would be killed. Later Tovey received a letter, again signed by Sharp, warning him to leave California or "take the same medicine dealt out to poor Jones." The veteran messenger ignored the threats.

Then, at seven o'clock on the morning of April 30, 1892, he boarded a stage in San Andreas, bound for Sheep Ranch, in the mountains 16 miles to the east. The Wells Fargo box held a mine payroll of $4,000 in gold coin. The coach was a canvas-topped "mud wagon," like a huge buggy, with three seats. The front seat held Tovey and the driver, 17-year-old Alphonso "Babe" Raggio. The second seat was occupied by Johannah Rodesino, age 15, and her sister, Louisa, 14. The rear seat held two more female passengers.

As the coach reached Willow Creek, a masked bandit arose from behind a large boulder above the stage road. Without a word of warning, he fired a single blast from his shotgun. Two buckshot struck young Raggio in the right shoulder and two more in his breast, piercing his right lung. He reeled in his seat, and as blood poured from his mouth, gasped, "They have killed me, Tovey, look out for the horses."

At the same time another buckshot tore into Mike's right arm and several more struck Johannah Rodesino in the chest and head, killing her. A huge manhunt failed to capture the killer, and Tovey and Raggio recovered from their wounds. In May 1893 Mike received another letter signed "Sharp" saying that he "had better leave Wells Fargo service and get out of the state, otherwise he would apt to be killed." A few weeks later, on the afternoon

Mike Tovey spent much of his career atop stagecoach lines bound to and from Nevada's capital city, Carson City (above). He first started guarding stages in the Silver State in 1875, riding routes from the capital to Bodie, California, and from Virginia City to Pioche.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

In 1879, Wells Fargo assigned shotgun messenger Mike Tovey to the mining town of Bodie, California. The Bodie stage was a frequent target of bandits, including future Tovey nemises Milt Sharp and William C. Jones (below). Jones, alias Frank Dow, was shot and killed by Tovey during a robbery of the northbound Bodie stage on September 3, 1880.

– COURTESY JOHN BOESSENECKER COLLECTION –

Calaveras County Sheriff, Benjamin K. Thorn, arrested William Evans for the murder of Michael Tovey on July 13, 1893 and incarcerated him in the jail in San Andreas. Evans confessed to the crime after repeated questioning by Thorn and his deputies.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

of June 15, 1893, he boarded the stage in Ione, bound for Jackson. At the reins of the six-horse team was Tovey's good friend, Clint Radcliff, a veteran driver. Inside the coach were four passengers, including two women and a boy, and a fifth rode on top with the driver and messenger.

It was 5:30 when the stage reached a lonely spot on the Morrow grade, five miles west of Jackson. Several of the passengers heard a sudden shout for the stage to halt, but Radcliff made out nothing over the rumbling of his coach. A split second later gunfire shattered the evening stillness. A lone bandit stood behind a three-foot high rock pasture fence on the right side of the road, working the lever of his .44 Winchester rifle. His first bullet struck Mike Tovey in the ride side, fracturing one rib and rupturing his aorta. The Wells Fargo man started to fall from the stage, and Radcliff yanked him upright. By the time Radcliff managed to halt the coach 300 yards down the road, Mike Tovey was dead.

Milt Sharp was captured in Red Bluff, in northern California, three months later. He managed to prove that he had led an honest life since his escape, and provided alibis from his employers showing that he could not have been at the murder scene. Wells Fargo's chief detective, Jim Hume, believed Sharp and helped get him a parole in 1894. An ex-convict, William Evans, was charged with killing Mike Tovey. A jury convicted Evans of first-degree murder and he was sentenced to life in San Quentin.

Mike Tovey was laid to rest in Jackson's city cemetery. Wells Fargo paid for his marker, which read, "He was shot and instantly killed by a robber who attempted to hold up the stage on which he was traveling as guard. Erected as a tribute of respect by his employers." He remains one of the most famous of the men who rode for Wells Fargo. ★

"Shotguns and Outlaws: Well's Fargo Shotgun Messenger Mike Tovey was one of the bravest of them all" is excerpted from **John Boessenecker**'s book, *Shotguns and Stagecoaches: The Brave Men Who Rode for Wells Fargo in the Wild West.*

On June 15, 1893, Milt Sharp (inset) shot and killled Milt Tovey as he rode shotgun on the lone-to-Jackson, California, stage. Tovey is buried in Jackson (above). Sharp served less than a year in prison before he was paroled.

– COURTESY JOHN BOESSENECKER COLLECTION –

Circa 1880, California re-enactors re-created a stage robbery similar to those many Wells Fargo messengers might have experienced on the Western frontier.

– COURTESY JOHN BOESSENECKER COLLECTION –

The heavy load of buckshot tore into Jones's face and neck, killing him instantly. Milt Sharp, armed with a six-shooter, opened fire and Tovey staggered as a bullet tore into his right arm, shattering the bone below the elbow.

BY DAVID JOHNSON

Death of a Cowboy, the Birth of a Legend

The final, fateful days of John Ringo

"The sheriff's posse returned from the pursuit of the Earp party yesterday evening at 5 o'clock. The bronzed and weather-beaten appearance of the posse–more especially of Sheriff Behan and Under-Sheriff Woods–was ample proof of the arduous and exhausting nature of the trip, which had just been brought to an unsuccessful termination."

–*Tombstone Daily Nugget*, April 3, 1882

John Ringo: "King of the Cowboys"
by Bob Boze Bell

– ALL ARTWORK AND IMAGES COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

Unlike the Earps, John Ringo remained in the region to face his accusers. His...court appearance [on a robbery charge] was scheduled for May 8, and it appears likely that he visited his sisters in San Jose during April. Several notices in local newspapers confirm his absence from Tombstone during this time. On April 15 a notice of a letter for "Ringe [sic] Jno." was published. This was followed by another notice on April 30 for "Ringold [sic] Jno." A third notice dated May 6, for Jno. Ringold may simply have repeated the earlier April 30 listing. During his absence Apaches killed another of his old friends, Tom Redding, on April 21, 1882, along with four other teamsters.

Ringo could easily have stayed in California to avoid the possibility of prison just as the Earps did, but he was not that kind of man. Unlike Wyatt Earp, he had not run when on trial for murder, and he did not run from the larceny charges.

On May 8, 1882, the *Epitaph* noted, "Jack Ringo is in Town." The same day, his attorney, Briggs Goodrich, petitioned the court for J.S. Robinson to be added as associate counsel for the defense. Ringo's trial was set for May 12, when the cases were continued until May 13. Cause 81 was continued on May 15. Finally, on May 18, all charges were dismissed and his bail exonerated. Ringo left the courtroom a free man.

While the trial was taking place, Ringo was enumerated in Cochise County's Great Register as entry 2649. The registration on May 16 listed him as a speculator. It incorrectly gave his residence as Tombstone and his age as 39. He had barely turned 32.

Ringo returned to New Mexico. One of those happy to see him there was Mary Hughes, a younger sister of Jim Hughes.

John Ringo was an especially welcome guest at the Hughes home. He was the hero of 11-year-old Mary Hughes. Whenever Mary, scanning the country from the watchtower, saw him coming, she put on her prettiest dress and combed her glossy, black hair. John Ringo, when he spoke to her, made

Descriptions of John Ringo vary, but a friend, A. M. Franklin, described him as six-foot two, with "light but not blond" hair and blue eyes.

her feel like a great lady. He had read many books, and he told her of what he read. So he taught her English from the family Bible, and Spanish from a book he had picked up in Tombstone. He taught her how to write, and she took enormous pride in copying his beautiful Spencerian chirography.

Ringo had now reached the pinnacle of his fame. His reputation remained intact, and he was well thought of by most of his contemporaries. At the same time he was still suffering from whatever darkness plagued him, and his efforts to blot it out led him to ever-heavier drinking that deepened his depression and caused him to drink more. It was a vicious circle.

In late June or early July he returned to Tombstone, where he was reportedly on an "extended jamboree." On July 2 he confided to an *Epitaph* reporter "he was as certain of being killed, as he was of being living then. He said he might run along for a couple of years more, and may not last two days."

Ringo left Tombstone on July 8, arriving at "Dial's in the South Pass of the Dragoons." From Dial's he rode on to Galeyville, where he continued drinking. Tombstone deputy Billy Breakenridge ran into him along the road. He wrote:

"... I met John Ringo in the South Pass of the Dragoon Mountains. It was shortly after noon. Ringo was very drunk, reeling in the saddle, and said he was going to Galeyville. It was in the summer and a very hot day. He offered me a drink out of a bottle half-full of whiskey, and he had another full bottle. I tasted it and it was too hot to drink. It burned my lips. Knowing that he would have to ride nearly all night before he could reach Galeyville, I tried to get him to go back with me to the Goodrich Ranch and wait until after sundown, but he was stubborn and went on his way."

The following day Ringo was found dead in Morse's Canyon. The *Epitaph* published a long obituary noting in part that:

He was recognized by friends and foes alike as a recklessly brave man, who would go any distance, or undergo any hardship to serve a friend or punish an enemy. While undoubtedly reckless, he was far from being a desperado and we know of no murder being laid to his charge. Friends and foes are unanimous in the opinion that he was a strictly honorable man in all his dealings, and that his word was as good as his bond. He was found by a man named John Yost [sic] *who was acquainted with him for years both in this Territory and Texas.*

Ringo had shot himself in the head. In New Mexico the papers also noted his death:

Another Great Soul Flown

It is with much regret that we chronicle the demise of one of the most illustrious men of the southwest. Had the much lamented deceased lived in antiquity his fame might have surpassed that of Hector or Ulysses; but alas, republics are ungrateful, and no public honor was ever shown to the king of the cowboys. Born of poor but honest parents, John Ringgold surmounted all the obstacles thrown in his path and made for himself a name that should live in the history of the nation. Gentleman like and pleasant in his manner, even easy going in many ways, he was a rigid observer of the old fashioned frontier code of honor that unfortunately is fast disappearing. During the past few years thirty-two men dared to doubt his honor. They now fill thirty-two graves. He distinguished himself when at Shakespeare by his fine and effective shooting, and is kindly remembered in that burg. Although he had many competitors in his line, he had no true rivals, and Curly Bill and Billy the Kid will not bear comparison with him. His body was found last week in the Chiricahua mountains with a bullet hole through the head. The supposition is that he was crossed in love and ended his sufferings in this tragic manner. Thus passed away in the flower of his youth a man who, had he lived, might have aspired to almost any eminent position. Alas! 'twas not to be:

Car il etait du monde ou les plus belles choses
Ont le pire destin.
Et Ringgold a vecu ce que vivent les roses
L'espace d'un matin.

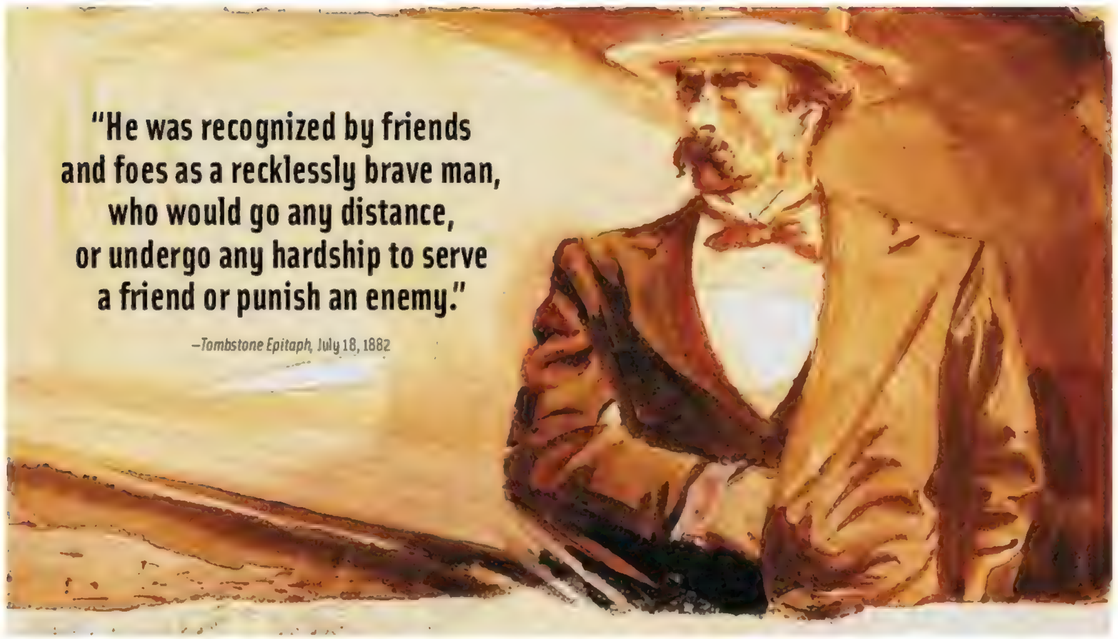
The poem translates as:
For he was of the world in which the most beautiful things
Have the worst destiny,
And Ringgold lived as live the roses
The duration of a morning.

Other accounts noted his passing, but these two provided by the contemporaries who knew him best clearly indicate the sense of loss felt by the community.

Ringo's death remains controversial. Since his demise in 1882, many have denied that Ringo killed himself and advanced numerous men as the assassin. One popular theory is that Wyatt Earp returned to Arizona to kill Ringo. This has led to elaborate scenarios where Wyatt and a party of men waited until Ringo was roaring drunk and killed him. Among the various others blamed for murdering Ringo have been Doc Holliday and Buckskin Frank Leslie.

Ringo biographer Jack Burrows opts for suicide. He quotes a letter from Charles Ringo to William K. Hall that states in part, "I have another story from a Mrs. Travis whose husband was of that family, that the sisters would not let him in the house. You will notice that the body was left in Arizona and not brought back." Based upon that and other correspondence from Charles Ringo, he concludes that Ringo had attempted to return to his family but met a hostile reception and despondently went back to

On January 17, 1882, John Ringo called out Doc Holliday but before a fight could ensue, police officer Jim Flynn grabbed Ringo from behind and arrested him, Doc and Wyatt. Taken to city court, Ringo and Doc were fined $32 each for carrying concealed weapons. The charge against Wyatt was dropped because he was a U.S. deputy marshal.


"He was recognized by friends
and foes as a recklessly brave man,
who would go any distance,
or undergo any hardship to serve
a friend or punish an enemy."
–Tombstone Epitaph, July 18, 1882

Arizona, where he killed himself. Another states, "John Ringo had lost all interest in life, and in a state of alcoholic despair the young man shot himself."

Seeking to prove that his family had disowned Ringo, one writer references letters Ringo received from his family and quotes Frank Cushing, John's nephew, as stating that he never wrote back. This is intriguing, for if John did not write to his family, how did they know where to write to him once he left Missouri in the early 1870s? Moreover, if his family disowned him, why was he found with a letter from Fanny Jackson in his pocket? The *Citizen* stated, "In one of the pockets [of his coat] were three photographs and a card bearing the name Mrs. Jackson."

The statement made for the coroner has also provoked controversy, both for what it did and did not say. The points of contention may be summarized as its failure to mention that a bullet had been fired from the pistol, its failure to mention powder burns, and its description of "a bullet hole in the right temple, the bullet coming out of the top of the head on the left side. There is apparently a part of the scalp gone including a small portion of the forehead and part of the hair. This looks as if cut out by a knife."

The weaknesses in the statement can be explained in part by the backgrounds of the 15 witnesses. None of them were physicians, and the coroner was not present. They were describing what they saw as accurately as they could for the coroner. Concerning their failure to mention the discharged weapon, Ringo's obituary in the Tucson papers provided some additional information: "The pistol with *one chamber emptied* [emphasis added] was found in his clenched fist." Such papers as the *Phoenix Gazette* and the *Citizen* picked up that news release. The *Phoenix Gazette* noted:

Facing criminal charges for the murder of Frank Stilwell, Wyatt and Doc Holliday, with their vendetta posse of Warren Earp, Texas Jack, Charlie Smith and Turkey Creek Jack, rode out of Arizona ahead of Sheriff Behan and his posse, which included John Ringo, Phin and Ike Clanton.

"John Ringgold, one of the best known men in southwestern Arizona, was found dead in Morse's canyon, the Chiricahua mountains last Friday. He evidently committed suicide. He was known in this section as "King of the Cowboys" and was fearless in the extreme. He had many staunch friends and bitter enemies. The pistol, with one chamber emptied, was found in his clenched fist. He shot himself in the head, the bullet entering on the right side, between the eye and ear, and coming out on top of the head. Some members of his family reside at San Jose California."

Witness Robert M. Boller also confirmed that Ringo's pistol had been fired. "His pistol with one empty shell was caught in his watch chain." The failure to mention the discharged shell was simply that, a failure, which was corrected when the weapon was examined later.

The report's failure to mention powder burns could have resulted from either of two possible causes. First, as with the cartridge, the untrained observers might simply have overlooked any powder burns. Second, by the time Yoast found Ringo, the body was decaying in Arizona's summer heat. Boller recalled the "body was in such condition that we buried it right there." In another letter he provided more graphic details. Responding to Frank King's inquiry "if I noticed powder marks on Ringo's head" Boller wrote, "The body had turned black and was smelling." Boller further added:

"He had held the six-shooter against his head about an inch above his right ear and pulled the trigger. That is the way we all agreed that it happened except John Yoast, and he too was convinced when I showed him where the bullet had entered the tree on his left side. Blood and brains oozed from the wound and matted his hair. There was an empty shell in the six-shooter and the hammer was on that.

Despite the strange exit wound, the men who found Ringo never doubted that he had killed himself. "[A. E.] 'Bull' Lewis, who was in the coroner's jury told me there was absolutely no question but what Ringo committed suicide," Boller recalled. "There is no question in the minds of any of the five [sic] who found him but what [he] committed suicide."

Ringo's horse wandered until July 25. *"Smith,"* says the *Tombstone Independent*, *"found John Ringo's horse, on Tuesday last, about two miles from where the deceased was found. His saddle was still upon him with Ringo's coat upon the back of it. In one of the pockets were three photographs and a card bearing the name of 'Mrs. Jackson.' It seems strange that the horse should have wandered about all this time without having been discovered before. Mr. Smith brought the horse into town with him. It is a bay, weighing about 1,000 pounds."*

Why Ringo committed suicide is unknown and will likely remain so. It could be for reasons as complex as post-traumatic stress syndrome or simple depression exacerbated by alcohol. It could have been that a spur of the moment depression induced the impulse. Whatever the cause, all that is

On December 28, 1881, at least three shotguns sprayed pellets at Virgil Earp, hitting the post, walls and windows of the Golden Eagle Brewery (see circle of fire, above). It has never been determined if John Ringo, Hank Swilling or Curly Bill Brocius joined Ike Clanton in the shooting. No one was ever convicted in the shooting.

known for certain is that John Ringo killed himself at around three o'clock in the afternoon on July 13, 1882. His journey into folklore had begun.

THE LEGEND OF RINGO

For more than a century, John Ringo successfully eluded serious biographers. Never reluctant to let facts interfere with a good story, pulp writers and folklorists either invented or repeated settings and events that, given the dearth of factual evidence available, at times had the ring of truth. There is a copious amount of these fictions beginning in the 1920s and persisting to the present.

In the years following his death, John Ringo has fascinated readers. Historian Steve Gatto notes Ringo's legend "began to slowly sprout and take root" only four days after his death. The seeds of that legend were sown in Texas's bitter Hoo Doo War. At the time he was no different from dozens of other men engaged in the conflict, each with his own story. Yet unlike most of them, Ringo was destined to become a legend.

Walter Noble Burns can be credited with almost single-handedly popularizing John Ringo. From his pen emerged a tarnished knight errant who rode out of nowhere and died mysteriously. In 1927 Burns wrote, "John Ringo stalks through the stories of old Tombstone days like a Hamlet among outlaws, an introspective, tragic figure darkly handsome, splendidly brave, a man born for better things, who, having thrown his life recklessly away, drowned his memories in cards and drink and drifted without definite purpose or destination." With that single, emotional sentence, Burns set the stage for the romantic myth of John Ringo.

Unfortunately for history, Burns allowed his desire to write a marketable book interfere with historic truth. *Tombstone, An Iliad of the Southwest* mingled folklore with fact to the point that the entire volume is suspect. One writer characterizes the book as "seriously flawed. When Walter Noble Burns wrote *Tombstone* in the style of his time, the question followed: Is this history or is it a novel?" In creating the mythical John Ringo, Burns also created a target for later historians and writers to either assail or glorify.

Ringo was far more than a creation of Burns, however. In the pre-Tombstone gunfighting West he was recognized and respected. John Wesley Hardin, Texas's number one shootist, made Ringo's acquaintance in the Travis County jail in Austin.

Newman H. "Old Man" Clanton was the patriarch of the Clanton family, including sons Phin, Ike and Billy. John Ringo became acquainted with the Clantons sometime in the late 1870s when they were all ranching in the Arizona-New Mexico border region east of Tombstone.

Hardin apparently liked the man. William Preston Longley, a gunman of equal notoriety, also knew Ringo but disliked him. Any number of men tried to enhance their own reputations by boasting that they killed Ringo while he was passed out from a binge lasting several days. Little glory attaches itself to killing a sleeping man, and the historian must ask why so many have made the claim.

Part of the answer lies in Ringo's Texas years. He fought in the Hoo Doo War and arrived in Arizona with garbled accounts of that feud yapping at his heels. In his abbreviated account of the feud, Burns confused Ringo's actions with those of fellow feudist John Baird: "While he was little more than a boy, he became involved in a war between sheep and cattle men. His only brother was killed in the feud, and Ringo hunted down the three murderers and killed them." Burns doubtless drew that succinct and oversimplified version from one of his informants. It was what people in Arizona believed and, inaccurate as it was, Ringo could not escape his reputation. He was the feudist who destroyed his enemies, the remorseless gunman who killed savagely and emerged unscathed. In contrast, the men who knew Ringo generally liked him. Grace McCool, who interviewed Ringo's acquaintances, asserted, "All the old-timers who knew him, liked him, and spoke well of him."

EPILOGUE

John Ringo remains today as Burns described him, a tragic figure. From his youth, death stalked his family. His efforts to help them drew him into the violence of the Hoo Doo War and, later, into the notoriety of Tombstone. He has been branded a cattle thief—a charge for which not a single indictment has been located. Since his suicide in 1882 his family has been victimized, first by Allen Erwin and later by other writers who have further tarnished their names. Others such as George Upshur, inspired by Lake's work, recalled him as "the best and most powerful of all the cowboy gang leaders." In the end we are left with the recollections of those contemporaries who knew him best. "Friends and foes are unanimous in the opinion that he was a strictly honorable man in his dealings, and that his word was as good as his bond."

It is a fitting epitaph for a man.

"Death of a Cowboy, Birth of a Legend" is excerpted from *John Ringo, King of the Cowboys: His Life and Times from the Hoo Doo War to Tombstone, 2nd Edition*, by **David Johnson**, Foreword by Chuck Parsons (University of North Texas Press).

MYSTERIES IN THE BOUGH OF A TREE

Grisly clues to an enduring mystery: John Ringo's body is found seated on a makeshift throne. The odd details of his condition have fueled debate for over a century.

In the 1920s, Tombstone Deputy Billy Breakenridge, one of the last to see Ringo alive, visited the remote grave site and sat in the bough of the tree while a companion snapped a photo. When the film was developed, an eerie face could be seen floating above Breck's head. Was it the ghost of Ringo? Some believe it is.

John Ringo is buried next to the tree where he died. Today the burial spot is on private property but access is granted to visit the grave.

BY MELODY GROVES

BUTTERFIELD'S GRAND ADVENTURE

"Remember Boys, Nothing on God's Earth Should Stop the United States Mail"

John W. Butterfield's highly anticipated moment in the sun lost its luster quickly. In Tipton, Missouri, he had planned to carry the canvas mailbags personally from the late-arriving St. Louis train and then sling them into the awaiting stagecoach. Within moments, the messages would gallop across country, all the way to San Francisco, 2,795 miles—a first endeavor of its kind. With that act, he would open the world's longest transcontinental mail line.

But the train conductor hadn't waited for 56-year-old "Old John," as he was affectionately known. Already, the bags had been unceremoniously dumped into the stage. Undaunted, on September 16, 1858, John Butterfield himself climbed aboard the first westbound stage, driven by John Butterfield Jr. With a yee haw and step up now boys, the first two Overland Mail Company stagecoaches set out from opposite ends of the line—the eastbound from San Francisco a day earlier.

Indeed, in the mid-19th century, when land and opportunity in California beckoned and Americans answered, the only way to send and receive mail coast to coast was by sea. Mail sent down either coast to Panama was carted across the boggy, tropical Isthmus, taking two to four weeks,

Departure of the Butterfield Overland Mail from San Francisco, was depicted in the December 11, 1858, issue of *Harper's Weekly*.

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company's inaugural westbound stage departed September 16, 1858.

From 1858 to 1861, John Butterfield's 2,795-mile, transcontinental Overland Mail Company ran 24 hours a day and set new standards for travel and mail service in the United States.

– INSERTS COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES/MAP OF BUTTERFIELD STAGE ROUTE COURTESY NYPL DIGITAL COLLECTION –

The Overland Mail Company's president, John Butterfield (inset), oversaw the line's coaches, which endured a wide variety of terrain and weather conditions. Heavy Concord stagecoaches built in Concord, New Hampshire, ran in the eastern section of the route, while the lighter Celerity coaches (above), built by Abbott Downing Company in Troy, New York, were used to cross the desert Southwest.

– COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

weather permitting. Loaded onto a steamer, mail, parcels and people then continued on to their destinations. A trip of four months was not unusual. Not good enough, people complained.

Surprisingly, Congress took note and on March 3, 1857, authorized Postmaster General and former Tennessee Governor Aaron Brown to contract for mail service from Missouri to California. The U.S. Postal Office advertised for bids. A few requirements were: (1) begin operation within one year; (2) use the selected "all weather, no mountain" southern road; (3) create a spur line or "bifurcated" course to Memphis, Tennessee; (4) cost no more than $600,000 annually; (5) provide semiweekly service; (6) deliver mail on each trip within 25 days. John Butterfield, friend to incoming president John Buchanan, won the bid—he and his associates signed a six-year contract on September 16, 1857—and the stage was set for the first efficient transcontinental mail service.

Born in Berne, New York, on November 18, 1801, John Warren Butterfield drove his first stagecoach at age 19 in Albany, New York, and then in Utica, where he would be elected mayor in 1856. Heavily involved in mail and passenger lines in upstate New York, he organized the Butterfield, Wasson & Company in 1849. The next year he merged his business with Wells & Co. and Livingston, Fargo & Co., to form the Wells and Fargo Company and also, the American Express Company.

Butterfield's unparalleled work ethics made him the right man to be president of the Overland Mail Company (OMC). The two starting points, St. Louis and Memphis, would converge at Fort Smith, Arkansas. The route would then run through Indian Territory (present-day Oklahoma), over the plains of Texas to Franklin (near El Paso), across arid New Mexico Territory (Arizona Territory not yet created) to Tucson, and then enter California at Fort Yuma on its way to Los Angeles and then north to the western terminal at San Francisco.

Naturally, Northerners objected. *The Sacramento Union*, based in the capital city missed by the southern road, called it a "foul wrong," "an outrage upon the majority of people of the state" and "a Panama route by land." *The New York Press* condemned it as "one of the greatest swindles ever perpetuated [sic]upon the country by slave-holders." Opinions were noted but disregarded, and the U.S. Postal Office pushed forward.

Within twelve months, Butterfield:

- Bought 1200 horses and 600 mules (each branded with OM—Overland Mail), then distributed them;
- Ordered 250 wagons;
- Procured several thousand tons of hay and fodder;
- Built 200 way stations every 20 miles;
- Dug 100 wells;
- Surveyed 2,800 miles, graded fording sites, opened new roads or improved old ones;
- Hired a thousand men as surveyors, conductors, drivers, blacksmiths, etc.;
- Created the run schedule.

Butterfield's credo resonated through the company: "Remember, boys, nothing on God's earth should stop the United States mail." Indeed, letters and packages (never payroll or valuables) were delivered in a timely fashion. By the outbreak of the Civil War, OMC stagecoaches were delivering more mail (at 10 cents per half ounce—$3.12 today) to and from the West Coast than all of the ships combined. Early on, Butterfield and his associates decided the deliveries would be more profitable if they took on passengers as well. Travel was not inexpensive—10 cents per mile or full one-way for $150 ($3,116 today).

No. 1.]

OVERLAND MAIL COMPANY.

[Sep. 16th, 1858.

THROUGH TIME SCHEDULE BETWEEN

ST. LOUIS, MO., MEMPHIS, TENN. & SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.

GOING WEST. GOING EAST.

LEAVE	DAYS	Hour.	LEAVE	DAYS	Hour.
St. Louis, Mo.	Every Monday & Thursday	8.00 A.M.	San Francisco, Cal.	Every Monday & Thursday	8.00 A.M.
Springfield, "	" Tuesday & Friday	6.00 P.M.	Visalia, "	" Tuesday & Friday	1.00 P.M.
Rock Creek, "	" Wednesday & Saturday	7.45 A.M.	Los Angeles, "	" Wednesday & Saturday	1.00 P.M.
Fort Smith, Ark.	" Thursday & Sunday	10.15 A.M.	Fort Yuma, "	" Thursday & Sunday	2.00 P.M.
Sherman, Texas	" Friday & Monday	1.00 P.M.	Fort Fillmore, "	" Friday & Monday	3.00 P.M.
Fort Belknap, "	" Sunday & Wednesday	12.30 P.M.	Mesilla, "	" Sunday & Wednesday	3.00 P.M.
Fort Chadbourne, "	" Monday & Thursday	3.00 A.M.	Fort Thorn, "	" Monday & Thursday	1.30 P.M.
Horse Head Crossing, "	" Tuesday & Friday	7.15 P.M.	Rio Grande, "	" Tuesday & Friday	1.30 P.M.
El Paso, "	" Thursday & Sunday	1.45 A.M.	Fort Chadbourne, "	" Thursday & Sunday	3.00 A.M.
Southern Boundary, "	" Saturday & Tuesday	12.15 A.M.	Fort Belknap, "	" Saturday & Tuesday	8.00 A.M.
Limpia, "	" Sunday & Wednesday	8.30 P.M.	Fort Arbuckle, "	" Sunday & Wednesday	8.00 A.M.
Pecos River, Arizona	" Monday & Thursday	1.30 P.M.	Colbert's Ferry, "	" Monday & Thursday	8.00 A.M.
Cow Spring, "	" Tuesday & Friday	1.30 P.M.	Fort Washita, "	" Tuesday & Friday	12.45 P.M.
Fort Yuma, Cal.	" Wednesday & Saturday	9.00 P.M.	Fort Arbuckle, "	" Wednesday & Saturday	1.00 A.M.
San Bernardino, "	" Friday & Monday	3.00 P.M.	Fort Inge, "	" Thursday & Sunday	7.30 P.M.
Los Angeles, "	" Saturday & Tuesday	11.00 P.M.	Fort Clark, "	" Friday & Monday	4.00 P.M.
Visalia, "	" Monday & Thursday	1.30 A.M.	Fort Merrill, Ark.	" Saturday & Tuesday	4.00 P.M.
Stockton, "	" Tuesday & Friday	11.30 A.M.	Fayetteville, Mo.	" Monday & Thursday	6.45 A.M.
Stockton Ferry, "	" Wednesday & Saturday	5.30 A.M.	Springfield, "	" Monday & Thursday	6.45 P.M.
San Francisco, "	" Thursday & Sunday	8.30 A.M.	St. Louis, Mo.	" Tuesday & Friday	10.30 P.M.

JOHN BUTTERFIELD, Pres't.

Tucson, recounted his ride: "*... and there being room inside for only ten of the twelve legs, each side of the coach was graced by a foot, now dangling near the wheel, now trying in vain to find a place of support... Unusually heavy mail in the boot, by weighing down the rear, kept those of us who were on the front seat constantly bent forward...*"

Butterfield's Grand Adventure changed travel as it was known prior to 1858. For the first time, passengers rode 24/7, teams changed every 15 to 25 miles. Before this, passengers as well as the coach and horses stopped for the night, often camping along the road.

Home stations were built to accommodate hungry passengers. They would find food

Overland Mail Company stages rolled into the humble El Paso, Texas, station Saturdays and Tuesdays. The passengers would disembark, wash up and have a quick meal while a new set of horses was hitched-up and fresh drivers took the reins.

– COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

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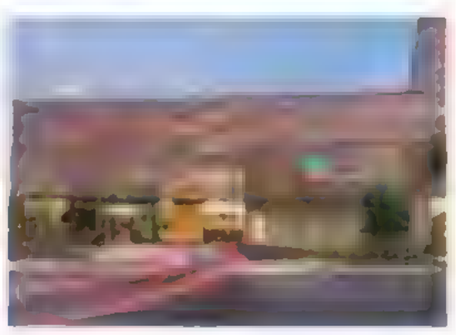
Gilbert Waldman Collects
Sept. 10, 2019 – Aug. 24, 2020

Maynard Dixon's American West
Oct. 15, 2019 – Aug. 3, 2020



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Artwork Credits: Emil Bisttram, ***Indian Woman*** 1932, oil on canvas, Collection of Gilbert Waldman; Maynard Dixon, ***Earth Knower***, 1934, oil on canvas, Collection of the Oakland Museum of California, Gift of Dr. Atalio Rets; Historic Native American objects, from SMoW's exhibition, *Courage and Crossroads: A Visual Journey Through the Early American West*, Courtesy of the Peterson Family Collection, photo by Loren Anderson; and museum building photo by Bill Timmerman, Courtesy Studio Ma, Architect

San Antonio, Texas, was the eastern terminus of the Jackass Mail, a.k.a. the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line. Texan George H. Giddings bought the contract to deliver the mail from San Antonio, Texas, to San Diego, California, from Otis H. Kelton.

– COURTESY BEINECKE LIBRARY, YALE UNIVERSITY –

BY GERALD T. AHNERT

Surviving the Ride on the Jackass Mail

Crossing the desert proved an ordeal passengers could never forget.

A San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line (the Jackass Mail) ad stated: "Passengers and Express matter forwarded in new coaches drawn by six mules over the entire length of our Line, excepting the Colorado Desert of 100 miles, which we cross on mule back. Passengers GUARANTEED in their tickets to ride in Coaches, excepting the 100 miles, as stated above."

The state of various well-used wagons should have been the first clue for the boarding passengers that the ad was more fiction than truth.

On June 12, 1857, James E. Birch, of Swansea, Massachusetts, entered into contract with the U.S. government for Route No. 8076 at $149,800 per annum, for a semi-monthly service to commence on July 1, 1857, and to expire June 30, 1861. Birch had only three weeks to organize the 1,475-mile-long trail through the frontier. He assigned Isaiah C. Woods as superintendent.

Birch's wife, Julia, wanted a mansion filled with beautiful things with servants to care for them. Birch left Woods in charge while he returned to Swansea to finish building Julia's mansion. On September 12 he booked passage on the ill-fated side-wheeler *Central America* that was laden with gold from the California goldfields. About 40 miles from Cape Hatteras, in a violent storm, the ship split her seams. Birch had refused the offer of a life-belt, and a survivor relayed Birch's last words "No, Gabe; it's no use," as he strode away, smoking a cigar whose glow he fully intended should be extinguished with the last breath of his life.

In 1853-56, Birch had made a fortune from his very successful California Stage Company. He knew enough to use Concord stages, as they were known to be the best for enduring the rigors of the frontier. For his San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line, he ordered six passenger wagons from J. S. & E. A. Abbot, Concord, New Hampshire. The passengers and mail were to be transported on these well-constructed stages—but the Fates had another plan.

As soon as his wife, Julia, received word of his death, she sold all interests in the line to her half-brother Otis H. Kelton. The new stages were never put into use, as an ad in the *Memphis Daily Appeal*, June 25, 1858, states that five of them were for sale.

Kelton then sold the contract to Texan George H. Giddings, who managed the trail from San Antonio. R. E. Doyle became his partner and managed the western end of the trail from San Diego.

Superintendent Woods had a monumental job to do. In only three weeks he had to buy mules and hire personnel. Very few stations were built, and in Arizona only one crude pole-and-brush station was built at Maricopa Wells. In a letter received from Tucson by the *San Francisco Herald*, November 25, 1857, was the following:

"We reached the 'Maricopa Wells,' about 12 o'clock at night. The stage company proposes putting up an adobe house, corral, etc., at this place. At present a miserable brush house is the only shelter, and only the other day a surly Indian was seen showing his red brethren how easy it would be to send an arrow through it."

At the beginning of the line's service, the trail they followed was the old military road from San Antonio to El Paso, Texas. From there, they followed the Emigrant/Southern Overland Trail that zigzagged from water hole to water hole. The line left the trail and made its way through the mountains to San Diego.

Although the mail was sometimes carried by wagon, the required contract delivery time of thirty days was mostly accomplished by frontier know-how, utilizing riders on muleback familiar with the dangers of the frontier, such as Bigfoot Wallace, Henry Skillman, and Silas St. John. For this reason, the line became known as the "Jackass Mail."

In September 1857, John Butterfield won the contract for the Overland Mail Company, and was given one year to ready his 2,700-mile-long trail for service. By the start of service in September 1858, he had significantly improved and shortened the trail and provided regularly spaced water sources, which benefited the San Antonio and San Diego Line.

The Jackass Mail had its contract as a through-mail cut short on January 1, 1859, because of the duplication of mail services with the Overland Mail Company. After that date, they carried mail from San Antonio to El Paso, Texas, and from Fort Yuma to San Diego, California. Although there was now no through-mail, the line still carried passengers on the entire length of its trail.

Superintendent Woods stated in his November 1857 report to Postmaster General A. V. Brown that: "We had seven coaches on the road...." Mostly, they were worn-out wagons that frequently broke down.

Because of the unreliability of a set schedule for the passengers on the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line, some passengers heading west from San Antonio departed at El Paso to transfer to one of Butterfield's more reliable Concord stage Celerity wagons. In 1859, George Foster Pierce was a passenger from San Antonio to El Paso where he transferred to a Butterfield stage. In his memoir he stated: *"The stage from San Antonio runs no further than El Paso, and we had to wait two days for 'the Overland,' as it is called."*

Phocion R. Way was a passenger on the Jackass Mail in June 1858 and complained bitterly about the unreliability of the stages. He wrote in his diary:

"...3 o'clock P. M. We are now about 8 or 10 miles from Mesilla. We have stopped to feed. We took another passenger at Mesilla, which makes our whole number 5. We have also to carry feed for our mules, a large

The Butterfield Overland Mail Company and the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line's stage and mail service both suffered their greatest losses when the Apaches began attacking the coaches.

– CHARLES SCHREYVOGEL, "SAVING THE MAIL" (1900), COURTESY DICKINSON RESEARCH CENTER, NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER –

The Jackass Mail and Butterfield's Overland Mail Company simultaneously used 900 miles of the Southern Overland Trail, from El Paso, Texas, to Carrizo Creek, California, until the line was suspended at the beginning of the Civil War.

– COURTESY GERALD T. AHNERT COLLECTION –

amount of baggage and the mail, which makes our load very heavy—unusually heavy. The driver is fearful that we will break down before we get through. The company should have sent another carriage but it was not done; in fact, the company have deceived us and acted shamefully from the start. They told us that the two carriages we started with would go all the way through to San Diego, and both of them have been taken from us. We left the last one at Fillmore and have an old wagon in its place. The one we have is strong and would do very well, but we should have another; it is not sufficient. The mules we have now are good, but those we have had were broken down things; and what is worse than all, they tell us now that the wagon will go no further than Tucson, and consequently those unfortunate fellows who are going through to San Diego will have to ride mule back from Tucson and keep up with the mail which is also packed on mules, and travels day and night. The poor fellows will have to travel 500 miles over a barren desert and I am afraid it is more than they can stand. It is a gross imposition that should not be born [sic] and the public should know it. They paid their money with the full understanding that they were to be taken through in an ambulance. The men employed along the line are fine fellows, and of course they are not responsible for this. This is an important route and will be much traveled, and [the] Government should see that it is properly managed."

Before a single stage rolled West, Swansea, Massachusetts, resident Julia Birch sold the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line when her Yankee businessman husband, James E. Birch, drowned in a shipwreck off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina.

– COURTESY GERALD T. AHNERT COLLECTION –

After arriving at Tucson, Phocion writes: "*The mail company do not run their stages farther than here, and those who paid their passage through must ride over a sandy waste on mule back and furnish the mules themselves, or stay here and get the fever and ague. This is a most rascally imposition and the company will very likely have to pay for it. If they are not compelled to pay damages, their business will be very much injured by the representations of those imposed upon. The mail company are certainly not consulting their own interests by acting this way.*"

Correspondent Charles F. Huning wrote about the unreliable schedule. In the *Sacramento Daily Union*, March 12, 1858, he reported that after leaving San Diego they "*...road [sic] on horseback that day...*" After arriving at Vallecito, he wrote, "*Here we met the passengers coming from the other end of the route, five in number; they complained very much, and had had a very hard time of it...*" When he arrived in Tucson he wrote: "*We got to Tucson, was very much disappointed at hearing that I would have to stay at that place until the return of the stage from Mesilla.*" This was sometime before Christmas and later he wrote: "*On New Year's Eve, I was glad to see the coach arrive.*"

Probably the most colorful account for traveling on the Jackass Mail line was given by Phocion R. Way after his arrival at Tucson: "*There is no tavern or other accommodation here for travelers, and I [was] obliged to roll myself in my blanket and sleep either in the street or in the corral, as the station house had no windows or floor and was to [sic]close and warm. The corral is where they keep the horses and mules, but I slept very comfortably as the ground was made soft by manure.*"

Because the passengers didn't know if they would travel by muleback or stage, or if they would arrive at their destination on a set time schedule, added to the difficulty of sleeping and eating along the trail meant the memory of their journey would stay with them for the rest of their lives—if they survived!

Gerald T. Ahnert of Syracuse, New York, has been interested in the Butterfield Overland Mail Company for 50 years. During the past 10 years he has focused on the colorful history of the Jackass Mail.

SCENES FROM THE SOUTHERN OVERLAND TRAIL

Passengers on Butterfield's Overland Mail Company and the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line stages experienced first-hand some of world's harshest desert conditions in the Southwest. Fortunate for us, travelers, soldiers and surveyors sketched and painted their experiences along the desert trail in the 1850s.
–Editors of *True West*

Because the San Antonio and San Diego Mail Line stages stopped along the trail so the passengers could sleep (as seen in this drawing) and have meals, it became difficult to meet the 30-day requirement for delivery of the mail. This scene (left) of the Jackass Mail in Arizona, October 1858, was drawn by William H. Hilton, who was on a passing Butterfield stage. The stage in the drawing is very similar to the "ambulance" style.

– COURTESY HUNTINGTON LIBRARY, SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA –

Between Gila Bend and Tucson, Maricopa Wells (right) was one of the most important water stops for travelers and horses as it was at the eastern edge of the 40-mile desert.

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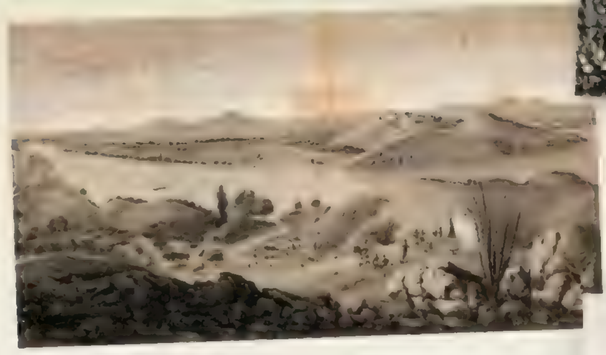
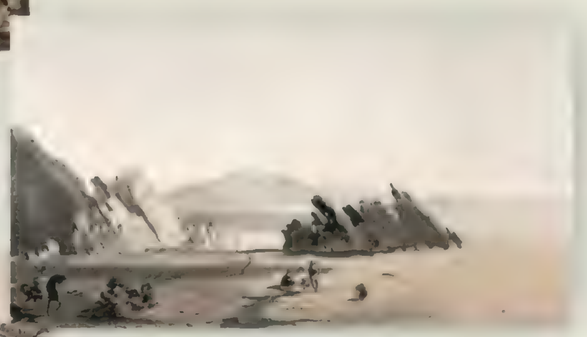


The stage line's ferry crossing at Yuma, New Mexico Territory (left), helped the simple village across the Colorado River from Fort Yuma, California, to become a strategic crossroads for the settlement of the desert Southwest.



Westbound travelers on the Jackass Trail knew they were not far from the cut-off to San Diego when they spied these dramatic geologic features in the Colorado Desert near Carrizo Creek, California (right).

The 700 or so residents of the isolated, seaside California village of San Diego (left) had to be greatly disappointed when the Apaches and the Civil War ended their mail service.

TRUE WEST EXCLUSIVE

CLASSIC GUNFIGHTS

ONE MAN WITH COURAGE MAKES A MAJORITY

JEFF MILTON VS THE BURT ALVORD GANG

"LOOK OUT FOR THE SON OF A BITCH, HE'S SHOOTING TO KILL."

Three-Fingered Jack gets three fingers full of buckshot in the gut from Jeff Milton's shotgun.

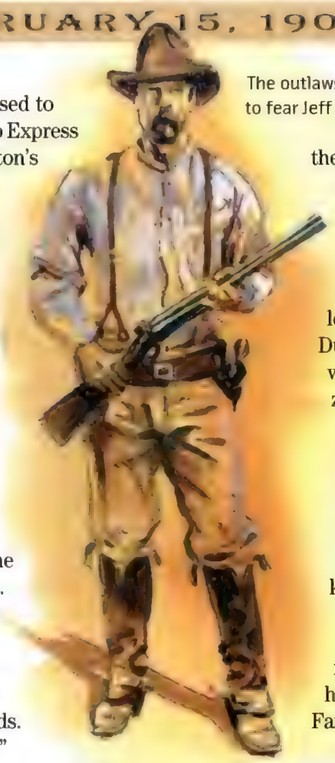
– ILLUSTRATIONS BY BOB BOZE BELL –

BY BOB ALEXANDER

Maps & Graphics by Gus Walker

Based on the research of Mark Boardman, John E. Hallwas and Les Kruger

FEBRUARY 15, 1900



The outlaws had good reason to fear Jeff Milton's resolve.

Today is supposed to be Wells Fargo Express Agent Jeff Milton's day off. But someone telegraphed in sick, so he is working the run from Nogales, Arizona, to Benson (see map, opposite page).

At dusk, when the train glides into the small station in Fairbank along the San Pedro River Valley, Jeff opens the express door to unload the packages bound for Tombstone and the surrounding area. As Jeff hands down the designated goods to the station agent, a cowboy on the platform yells out for Jeff to put up his hands.

"What's going on here?" Jeff asks an agent.

"Just a bunch of drunk cowboys having a joke,

I guess," the agent replies.

"That kind of joke is liable to get somebody killed," says Jeff, as he continues unloading packages.

Five cowboys, who are using passengers on the platform as shields, show their weapons. One of them yells, "Throw up your hands and come out o' there!" With the command comes a rifle shot; the slug takes off Milton's hat.

Reaching behind the door of the express car, Milton appears with a sawed-off shotgun and barks back, "If there's anything here you want, come and get it." He quickly sizes up the situation though, realizing he can't return fire with the shotgun without hitting innocent people. Unfortunately, his pistol is on his desk, inside the car.

The five cowboys, still hiding behind passengers, open fire with high-powered rifles. The volley of shots from the outlaws shreds Milton's shirt as several shots strike his left arm between the elbow and shoulder, spinning him around and knocking him flat.

Thinking they have killed Milton, or at least knocked him out of the fight, the outlaws jump up into the doorway of the railroad car. Milton raises the shotgun with one hand and lets loose, hitting Jack Dunlap with pellets while another ball zings past Dunlap and hits Bravo Juan Yoas in the seat of his pants.

"Look out for the son of a bitch, he's shooting to kill," yells Dunlap, as he falls.

Milton's wound is serious (a slug has cut an artery). Faint from the loss of blood, Milton still has the presence of mind to kick the door shut and, at the same time, remove the keys to the safe from his pocket, flinging them into a pile of packages at the opposite end of the car. Cramming his wounded arm into the handle of a trunk, he rips the sleeve of his shirt at the cuff, tearing it to the shoulder, then twists his homemade tourniquet around his arm to stop the flow of blood spurting in his face. Before finishing, he passes out, landing between the two trunks.

Outside, the outlaws circle the car and shoot round after round into it to ensure the death of Milton. After threatening the life of the engineer and using his body as a shield, the robbers climb into the car. One outlaw is about to shoot Milton, but the engineer stops him by pleading, "The man's dead now." The men search frantically for the keys but can't find them. In desperation, they round up their pard Dunlap and gallop off into the night with $40 in change.

The fight is over, but the race to save Milton's life has just begun.

A Clever Ruse Fails

The train robbers go out of their way to make sure Milton is far away from the action on the day of the robbery. The gang sends Billy Stiles to Nogales to tempt Milton with a story that a mining man wants to look at Jeff's claims out at the Quijotoa Mountains west of Nogales. They plan it for Milton's day off. To make doubly sure, Stiles asks Jeff to wire him from Nogales in case of any change in plans.

Milton does not get his day off, though. He receives a telegram in Imuris, Sonora, from W.F. Overton of the express company, informing him that the messenger on duty is sick. Jeff forgets about his meeting with the mining speculator and mans his post through Nogales. The outlaws no doubt do a double-take when they see Milton—the very man they did not want to go up against—standing in the doorway of the express car in Fairbank.

The Race to Save Jeff Milton

After standing off five armed outlaws all by his lonesome, Jeff Milton is rushed to Benson where a special train arrives to transport him to the hospital in Tucson. An improvised tourniquet goes a long way in helping save Milton's life. At Saint Mary's hospital in the Old Pueblo, Dr. H.W. Fenner operates on Milton's shot-up arm, tying the bone with piano wire.

After nearly three hours under chloroform, Milton awakes in the night, thirsty for water. A young Mexican boy assigned to watch over Milton tells the lawman he is on strict orders not to give him any water.

"Listen here," the grizzled lawman hisses at the boy. "If you don't bring me some water, when I get up from here, I'm going to kill you."

The boy quickly brings a pitcher of water. Jeff drinks it all, calls for more and finishes three pitchers before his thirst is satiated. Then he sleeps eight hours.

A nurse arrives the next morning and notices Milton's gun under his pillow. The nurse reprimands him, "You can't keep that thing there." He replies, "Well, if I can't, I'll go to another hospital."

With the wound not healing properly, Dr. Fenner sends the lawman to San Francisco for treatment. By this time, Milton's arm is stinking and his left leg is swelled up to the size of his body. When the doctors at the Southern Pacific Hospital tell Milton to prepare his will because they are amputating his arm at the elbow, Milton tells them they aren't taking off his arm. He asks for the bill and pays it.

Someone chauffeurs him to Lane Hospital in San Francisco so he can be seen by Dr. Goodfellow, an old friend of his from Tombstone. Ordering Milton a whiskey, the doctor probes and cleans out the wound, fitting his patient with a brace to support his arm. Goodfellow predicts Milton will never use the arm again.

Milton throws the brace out the train window on his way back to Arizona. He fashions a buckskin bag with birdshot, which he ties to his wrist so he can constantly attempt to grab it with his bad hand. Over time, he is able to flex his hand, but he never does recover the full use of his arm.

New Breed of Lawless Lawmen

Nearly two decades after the Earps fled Arizona as fugitives, Tombstone had faded as a mining mecca. Speculators all moved up the road to Pearce, taking some buildings from Tombstone with them.

A new breed of lawmen worked both sides of the fence during that time in Cochise County. Burt Alvord, who grew up in Tombstone, was a well-known badman, which was why the town of Willcox hired him as a constable to police the boisterous cowboys in the area.

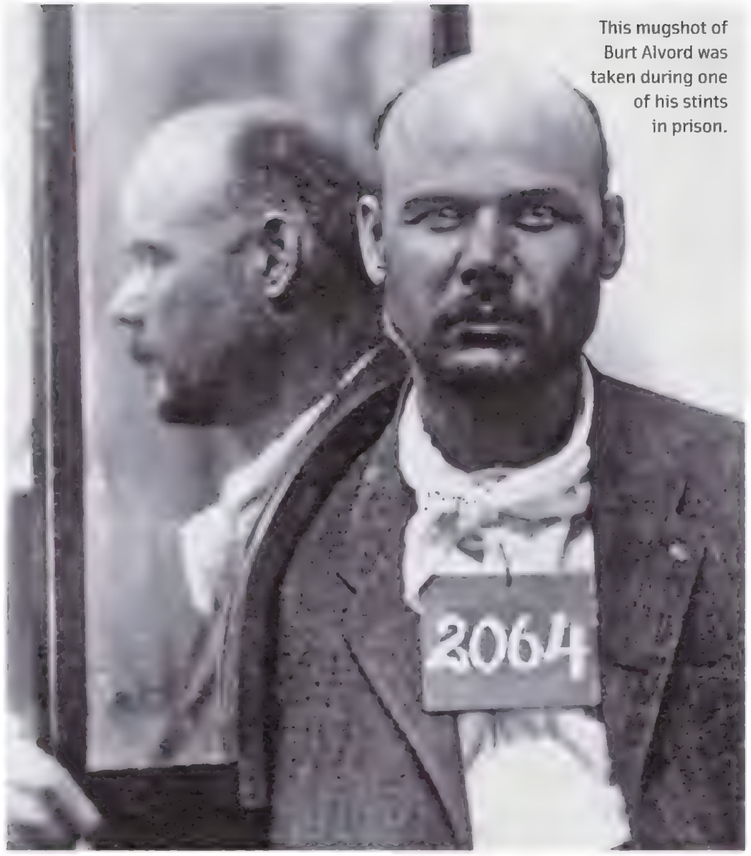
Alvord then hired Billy Stiles and Bill Downing as his deputies. Conspiring to leverage their newfound legality, Alvord gathered in local cowboys—including Matt Burts, the Owen brothers and Jack Dunlap—to rob some trains.

The gang's first robbery took place at Cochise Junction on September 9, 1899, when two men held up the train and got away with an untold amount of booty. Alvord and his men led the posses organized to chase those robbers and, of course, they found nothing. The second major robbery attempt occurred in Fairbank, but their well-laid plans to waylay Milton backfired. Then the posse out of Tombstone found Jack Dunlap where his partners had left him. He lived several days and "spilled the beans," implicating Matt Burts and confirming the suspicion that Burt Alvord, Billy Stiles and Bill Downing had backed the robbery.

Armed with Dunlap's confession, lawmen arrested the Owen brothers, Bob Brown, Downing, Stiles, Burts and Alvord. Stiles turned state's evidence, confessing he and Burts had committed the Cochise robbery and that Alvord and Downing had helped plan it. Released, Stiles went to Tombstone and busted Alvord out of jail.

At the request of Burt Mossman, the captain of the newly formed Arizona Rangers, Alvord and Stiles helped capture Mexican bandit Augustin Chacon. Yet the duo ended up in the Tombstone jail once more. They escaped their cell on December 15, 1903, fleeing to Mexico, but Alvord would soon find himself back in jail. Lawmen caught him while he was riding with Stiles through the Nigger Head Gap on February 17, 1904.

Alvord finally served time in the pen (see mugshot), but it would not be the last time he saw the inside of a jail cell. He continued to ride a slippery journey through the gray area of the law.



This mugshot of Burt Alvord was taken during one of his stints in prison.

A Confidential Report from the Arizona Rangers

Stiles and Alvord were still at it in 1906, according to a letter by Arizona Ranger H.H. McPhaul dated July 2 of that year. He warned authorities that the duo, lurking "near the Mexican line south of Yuma," intended to rob a train "on the [Southern Pacific] system."

The tip-off? The men were planning on placing water kegs along their escape route, intending to hold up "a train during the hot weather and, with the aid of the water kegs, outride and avoid any party sent after them," informants told McPhaul.

This never-before-published photo is labeled on the back, "Billy Stiles of Arizona," and was attached to the above-referenced Arizona Ranger report.

Jeff Milton, was photographed during his Texas Ranger days in the 1870s (left) and with his younger wife, Mildred Taitt Milton, outside their home in Tombstone (below). The background shows the Dragoon Mountains where the outlaws camped on the night before their robbery attempt in Fairbank.

A Good Man with a Gun

"Milton's Nerve" screamed the headline of an article about the express messenger's "brave stand" against overwhelming odds, published in the *Arizona Citizen* on February 16, 1900.

"He was extremely restless, but never nervous in danger" is how Milton's biographer, J. Evetts Haley, described him. "He was the agent of a proud and mighty land; he was always armed with the escutcheon of high honor. Not a pang of conscience ever plagued him. With a clean code, a sense of justice tempered with fairness, and a mind quick in appraisal, he positively knew that right had always ridden close at his side."

During Milton's long career, he had gone up against scores of badmen including John Selman, John Wesley Hardin and Black Jack Ketchum.

When his wife Mildred noticed a bullet scar beneath his jaw, she inquired, "Jeff, who shot you there?" He replied, "A man who is not alive."

Aftermath: Odds & Ends

Bravo Juan Yoas fled to Mexico. After stopping in Cananea to have his wound dressed, Mexican officers spotted him and arrested him. They handed him over to the sheriff in Tombstone.

Billy Stiles freely roamed around the West and was finally killed in Nevada in January 1908, while working as a deputy sheriff under the name William Larkin. Matt Burts was killed during a gunfight in Government Holes, California, in 1925. Bill Downing was killed in Willcox in 1908. Yoas supposedly died on the Amazon in 1910. Burt Alvord rambled around South America, and after a time in Brazil, he died of fever in Barbados in 1910. When the Owen brothers died is unknown.

Jeff Milton went from chasing outlaws on horseback as a Texas Ranger to jumping in a Model T Ford in 1917 at Tombstone, running down a bank robber and capturing him. He retired in 1930, due the rest after having served as a Ranger, range detective, mounted inspector along the Mexican border, rancher, prospector and oilman. After several years in Tombstone, he and his wife moved to Tucson, where he died at age 85 in May 1947.

Recommended: *Jeff Milton: A Good Man with a Gun* by J. Evetts Haley, published by University of Oklahoma Press; and *Spawn Gone Wrong—The Odyssey of Burt Alvord: Lawman, Train Robber, Fugitive* by Don Chaput, published by Westernlore Press.

"El tiene mas vidas de un gato. (He has more lives than a cat.)"

—Francisco Bedoya, about his old friend, Jeff Milton

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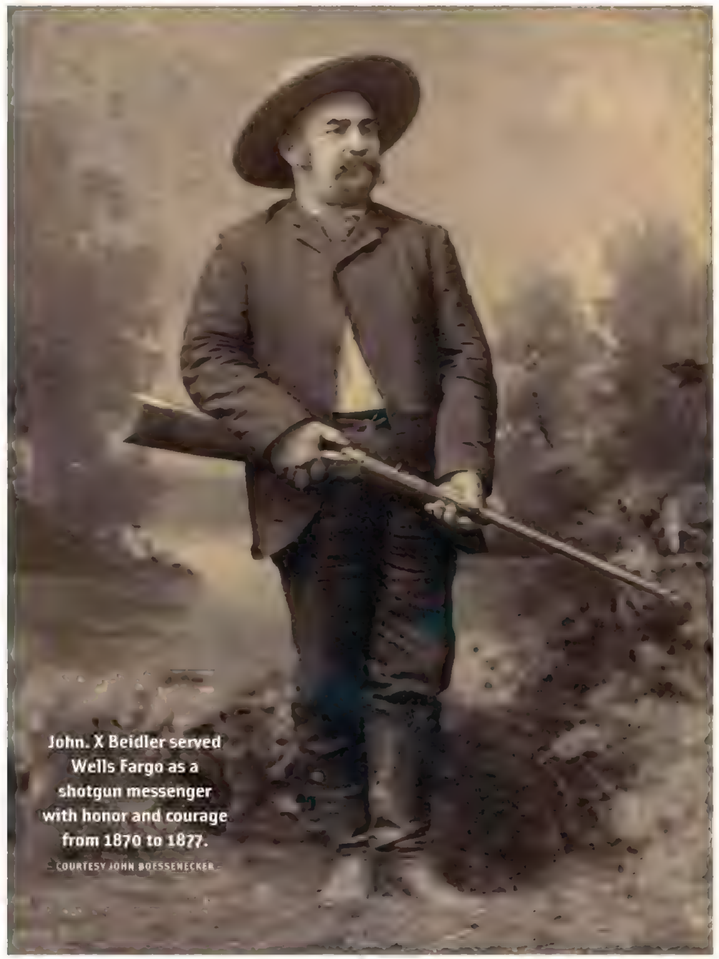
BY JOHN BOESSENECKER

LITTLE-KNOWN CHARACTERS OF THE OLD WEST

John X. Beidler

A shotgun messenger in Old Montana left a great legacy of service and courage.



John. X Beidler served Wells Fargo as a shotgun messenger with honor and courage from 1870 to 1877.

COURTESY JOHN BOESSENECKER

John X. Beidler was one of Montana's best known pioneers. A leader of the Montana vigilantes in the 1860s, he played a major role in breaking up the outlaw gang led by Henry Plummer, the archetypical crooked frontier sheriff. Although a small man, standing but five feet, five inches tall, he was a figure larger than life on the frontier. And like the mountain men who came before him, "X," as he was called by his comrades, loved to tell often exaggerated stories of his career. Yet one aspect of his adventurous life has been almost totally forgotten: his service as a Wells Fargo shotgun messenger from 1870 to 1877.

With his good friend Mike Tovey, Beidler guarded the company's shipments on the long route from Helena to the Union Pacific Railroad depot in Corinne, Utah. Although he had several hair-raising encounters with road agents, he preferred to recall the humor in his work. Wells Fargo agents tried to maintain secrecy when large treasure shipments were made. But on one occasion Beidler learned that it was common knowledge in Helena that a big shipment of gold dust was to be sent to the railroad in Corinne.

Just before the stage was to depart, "X" told the agent to hold the shipment until the next day. The agent sent out the stage with a near-empty express box, and sure enough, the coach was held up and robbed near the Snake River. The next day Beidler boarded a southbound stagecoach and brought the gold shipment to Corinne safely. When he arrived at the train depot, he found a dispatch waiting for him from Theodore Tracy, the Wells Fargo agent in Salt Lake City, which read, "Beidler, why in hell ain't you there when our coaches are robbed?"

Beidler fired off a telegram in response: "Why in hell don't they rob them when I'm there?"

The messenger was furious and took a train into Salt Lake City to see Tracy and hand in his resignation. As soon as Beidler stepped into the Wells Fargo office, Tracy demanded, "Well, X, you got my dispatch?"

"And you got my answer," Beidler replied.

"Yes, and it was just as good as I sent. What are you doing down here?"

"I've quit," Beidler said.

"Oh, go on back to work," said Tracy resignedly. "I'll raise your wages."

In 1877 Beidler resigned his position as a Wells Fargo shotgun messenger to become a deputy U.S. Marshal and Indian scout. His frontier life was grueling. Three years later a friend wrote, "Beidler is getting prematurely old from hard riding, exposure, etc., and his services have almost always been but very poorly paid." As late as 1889, he took part in a manhunt for two robbers who had committed a double murder. But his health continued to fail and he died in Helena on January 22, 1890, poor in pocket but rich in legacy. ★

"John X. Beidler: A Shotgun Messenger in Old Montana" is excerpted from **John Boessenecker**'s book, *Shotguns and Stagecoaches: The Brave Men Who Rode for Wells Fargo in the West*.

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TONOPAH NEVADA

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Following Arkansas' Trail of True Grit

Two centuries of Old West heritage awaits discovery across the Natural State.

Fifty years ago John Wayne and Kim Darby (top, inset) starred respectively as U.S. Deputy Marshal Rooster Cogburn and Mattie Ross in the adaptation of Arkansas author Charles Portis's *True Grit*. A tour of Fort Smith National Historic Site (above) will reveal the significant role of the U.S. Marshals Service, federal court and Judge Isaac Parker in the 202-year history of Fort Smith.

– PHOTO OF FORT SMITH NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE COURTESY NPS.GOV/TRUE GRIT COVER COURTESY JOHNNY D. BOGGS/TRUE GRIT LOBBY CARD COURTESY PARAMOUNT PICTURES –

Fifty years ago, a one-eyed deputy U.S. marshal for Judge Isaac Parker's court left Fort Smith, Arkansas—with a "spitfire of a girl" named Mattie Ross and a Texas Ranger (who could sing and pick a guitar like nobody's business but couldn't act a lick)—on a manhunt for Lucky Ned Pepper and his gang, which included the low-down skunk who had murdered Mattie's pa.

It was a pretty short trip. Cross the Arkansas River on a ferry (or swim it on your white-footed horse Little Blackie), head south to the Winding Stair Mountains in Indian Country (today's Oklahoma), fill your hand you @#**&@*@*, and return to Fort Smith.

True Grit remains Charles Portis's most acclaimed and most popular novel—even if *Norwood* is a lot funnier. First serialized in *The Saturday Evening Post*, *True Grit* was published in hardcover by Simon & Schuster in 1968. Director Henry Hathaway turned it into a hit movie the following year, with John Wayne as Rooster, Kim Darby as Mattie, Robert Duvall as Pepper, and Glen Campbell as LaBoeuf. Years later, at a concert at a casino outside of Santa Fe, New Mexico, Campbell prefaced his singing of *True Grit* with: "I had never acted before, and those of you who've seen the movie know my record remains intact."

In 2010, the Coen Brothers released a remake. The original was filmed in Colorado; the sequel used New Mexico. Neither location resembles Arkansas or Oklahoma.

The 50th anniversary puts *True Grit* back in the news, but Arkansas has an older anniversary. Two centuries ago, on March 2, 1819, President James Monroe signed the act that established Arkansas Territory.

EARLY ARKANSAS DAYS

Arkansas Post was chosen as the Territorial capital. The town was the first important European settlement in Arkansas, having been established by the French in 1686. In those early years, it was the territory's major white settlement, but its reign as capital lasted only two years. Its heritage is preserved at Arkansas Post National Memorial and Arkansas Post Museum State Park. In 1821, the capital moved to Little Rock.

Three years later, Washington was established as the Hempstead County seat, and the town became one of the most important stopovers for anyone traveling southwest to Texas. David Crockett and Sam Houston were among notable travelers. The town played an important role during Arkansas' Territorial years and after statehood was granted in 1836. Blacksmith James Black is said to have forged the original Bowie knife in Washington. Today, Historic Washington State Park re-creates the town's history of 1824-1889, including its time as the Confederate capital of Arkansas from 1863-1865.

CIVIL WAR

With the exception of Missouri, Arkansas saw more battles than most trans-Mississippi River states and territories. The largest and most famous came at Pea Ridge—a.k.a. Elkhorn Tavern—on March 6-8, 1862, when Union Gen. Samuel R. Curtis defeated Gen. Earl Van Dorn's Rebels, giving Federals control of the region. One of the Union scouts at that battle was a young Illinoisan named James, who would soon become famous as Wild Bill Hickok.

The Union won another victory on December 7, 1862, at Prairie Grove, while the Camden Expedition during the spring of 1864 saw a series of engagements at Elkin's Ferry, Prairie D'Ane, Poison Spring, Marks' Mill and Jenkins' Ferry. At Poison Spring and again at Marks' Mill, Confederate forces massacred a number of black Union volunteers. At Jenkins' Ferry, black soldiers got revenge by shooting wounded Confederates.

The Civil War Battle of Pea Ridge/Elk Horn Tavern on March 6-8, 1962, is regularly re-enacted at Pea Ridge National Military Park near Garfield in northwest Arkansas. The largest battle in the state during the conflict ceded control of the region to the Union Army.

LONG ARM OF THE LAW

Bloody deaths and wild characters filled Arkansas long before Judge Isaac Parker first sat on the bench of the U.S. Court for the Western District of Arkansas in 1875. "Permit no innocent man to be punished," Parker often instructed his juries during his 21-year term, "but let no guilty man escape." He sentenced 160 to die, but ended up hanging only 79.

Rooster Cogburn did most of his killings in the Indian Nations, but Arkansas had its share of bad men. Davis Tutt was born in Yellville—Mattie Ross's hometown —in 1839. In the 1840s, a political argument in Yellville started the Tutt-Everett War. Lawlessness took root in Marion County and didn't end until Hansford "Hamp" Tutt

The Ozark city of Eureka Springs in northwest Arkansas is world-famous for its natural hot springs. Visitors will enjoy touring, soaking and staying downtown in the Victorian-era historic district.

– ALL PHOTOS COURTESY THE ARKANSAS DEPT. OF TOURISM UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

A heritage tour of Arkansas during its Territorial bicentennial should include a visit to Historic Washington State Park. Docents and re-enactors introduce guests to the significance of the frontier village's role in the area's history.

was mortally wounded in an ambush, and, according to legend, asked on his deathbed for the Tutts and allies not to avenge his death. Davis Tutt would've been too young to do much killing, but after serving in the Civil War for the South, he became a gunfighting legend in Springfield, Missouri, in 1865, when Hickok shot him dead. On January 24, 1874, the James-Younger Gang robbed the Malvern-Hot Springs stagecoach, taking $2,000 in cash and valuables. In 1896, outlaw Bill Doolin picked the wrong bathhouse to visit in Eureka Springs; lawman Bill Tilghman caught him with his pants down, so to speak.

Over in Fort Smith, Parker never had Rooster Cogburn for a deputy, but he had plenty of good men. Frank Dalton, older brother of the bad Daltons of Coffeyville, Kansas, fame, was commissioned as a deputy in 1884. Three years later, at age 28, he and Deputy J.R. Cole crossed into the Cherokee Nation to arrest horse thief and whiskey runner Dave Smith, who shot Dalton, then was killed by Cole, who was then wounded by Smith's companions. The wounded Cole made it to Fort Smith, and returned with a posse to find Dalton, Smith and a woman dead, and one man mortally wounded.

But Parker's best lawman was Bass Reeves, who climbed out of slavery in Crawford County, Arkansas, to become one of the West's great lawmen, credited with arresting 3,000 men and killing 14. After Reeves died of Bright's Disease in 1910, the *Muskogee Phoenix* reported: "He was buried with high honors, and his name will be recorded in the archives of the court as a faithful servant of the law and a brave officer. And it was fitting that such recognition was bestowed upon this man."

He'll get more recognition in Fort Smith on another important anniversary. September 24, 2019, is the 230th anniversary of the creation of the U.S. Marshals Service. September 24 is also when the Mary Carleton and Robert A. Young III Building and the Samuel M. Sicard Hall of Honor, part of the long-awaited $50 million U.S. Marshals Museum, will be dedicated in Fort Smith.

That's a trip Rooster Cogburn would have gladly taken, and he wouldn't have demanded $50 in advance. ★

Johnny D. Boggs's novel about Bass Reeves, *Legacy of a Lawman*, won a Spur Award from Western Writers of America in 2012. But he still likes *True Grit* better.

WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

WIDE SPOT IN THE ROAD

"How high's the water, Mama?"

You can find out in Dyess, Arkansas, the flood-prone "agricultural resettlement colony" established by President Franklin Roosevelt in Mississippi County, Arkansas, in 1934. It's where young Johnny Cash grew up after his dad moved the family—one of 500 struggling families—there in 1935.

Managed by Arkansas State University, Historic Dyess Colony: Johnny Cash Boyhood Home (*DyessCash.astate.edu*) offers tours of the colony, including Cash's home (one of the few remaining from the New Deal project) and restored buildings housing the visitors center and exhibits. A bus takes visitors to Cash's home Mondays through Saturdays.

The museum is excellent, and Cash's Spartan home and hard landscape reveal how the Man in Black was inspired to write *Five Feet High and Rising* before he was inspired by a certain Western magazine to make a concept album in 1965: *Sings the Ballads of the True West*.

The Johnny Cash Boyhood Home has been preserved in Dyess, Arkansas. The humble house was part of a Depression-era agricultural colony.

GOOD EATS & SLEEPS

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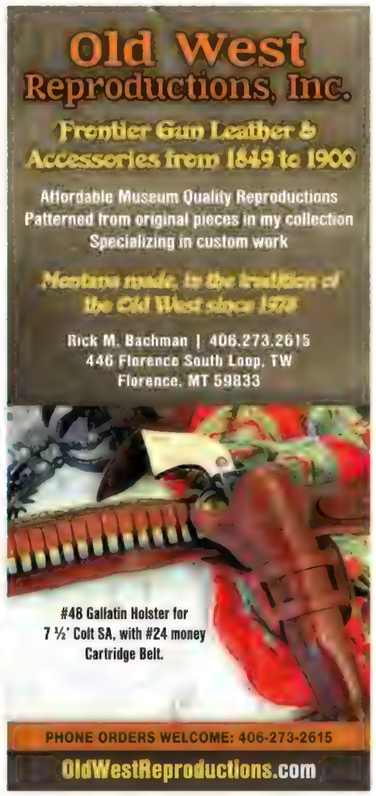
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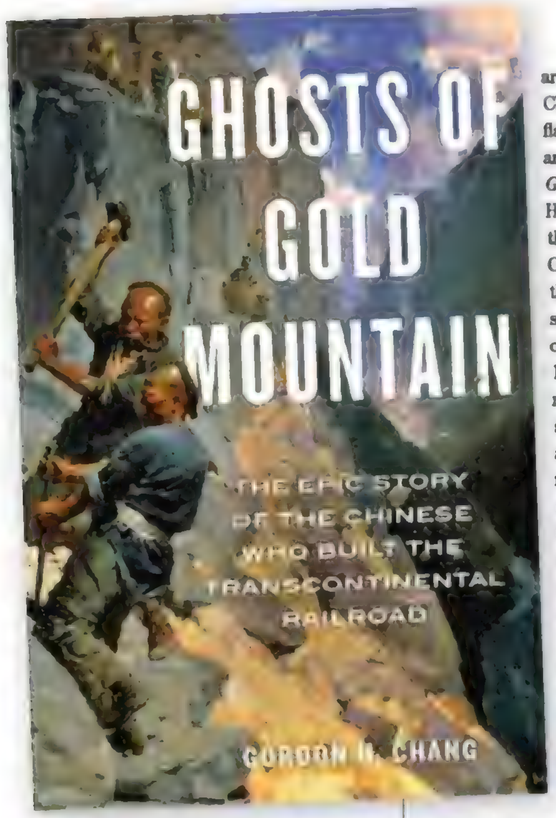
Tarnished Gold

A heartbreaking history of the Chinese who built the West, a new Sharps encyclopedia, biographies of Meriwether Lewis and Brigham Young plus an old-school Western.



Gordon H. Chang's *Ghosts of Gold Mountain: The Epic Story of the Chinese Who Built the Transcontinental Railroad* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, $28) is an instant classic and sure to be shortlisted for the Pulitzer Prize in History. Once again, Chang proves he is one of those rare historians publishing today who has the ability to write both academic and popular American history. The author and co-editor of eight previous books on Chinese and Asian-American history, Chang has mined the finest flakes of primary and secondary sources available to write *Ghosts of Gold Mountain*. His ability to bring voice to the voiceless and forgotten Chinese immigrants places the reader in the midst of the social, racial and economic chaos of California in the 1860s. "Though difficult, a recovery of a lost past is possible if imaginative efforts are made to understand the rich and expansive historical materials that do exist," Chang states in his Introduction. "Nineteenth-century writers wrote extensively about the Chinese, and their observations can be read in many ways that move the Railroad Chinese from being objects for journalistic observation into the active center of the story."

Chang's *Ghosts of Gold Mountain* is also very personal. "As a Chinese American, I had wanted to know about the Chinese builders of the Transcontinental ever since I was a youngster," Chang says. "[B]ut it was not until recently that I had the opportunity to engage in a sustained effort to recover their history." Chang's lifelong curiosity about the Chinese rail workers led to groundbreaking oral history interviews of rail workers' descendants and primary research of previously untapped resources in the United States and China. Chang's *Ghosts* resets our shared understanding of the continental railroad construction as a purely national story into an international story of nation-building, immigration, labor, race, poverty, industrialization and globalization. In researching and writing such a complex story, Chang has woven a tapestry of American history heretofore unknown, while giving voice to the long-forgotten. As the Stanford professor so eloquently notes, "They are no longer just 'silent spikes' or 'nameless builders' but are emerging as real historical actors."

In addition to *Ghosts of Gold Mountain*, Chang has edited and published, with his co-director Shelley Fisher Fishkin of the Chinese Railroad Workers in North America Project at Stanford, *The Chinese and the Iron Road: Building the Transcontinental Railroad* (Stanford University, $30). The two volumes will quickly be the foundation for all students and scholars of the Chinese experience in America during the decades leading up to, during and following the completion of the Central Pacific Railroad in May 1869. The strengths of *Ghosts of Gold Mountain* include the annotated documentation of Chang's research in his end notes, and his ability to interpret the available information into a dramatic narrative of American history. Anyone who reads Chang's prose will be moved emotionally and will want to seek deeper answers about our shared past. We eagerly await his follow-up volume on Chinese-American history.

—Stuart Rosebrook

ROUGH DRAFTS

– COURTESY OF WILL BAGLEY –

Congratulations to Will G. Bagley, winner of the 2019 Owen Wister Award by the Western Writers of America and a 2019 Western Writers of America Hall of Fame inductee. The Salt Lake City-based author received his award at the annual WWA convention in Tucson, Arizona, on June 22, 2019.

On receiving the honor Bagley reflected, "No award could mean more to a writer than an award from his or her fellow writers."

Bagley has edited and written more than 20 books. While he might be best known for his Western overland trail and emigration history writing, he also has carved a strong niche for himself in chronicling the history of the Mormon Western migration and the founding and settlement of Utah.

With such a catalog of work, where do you start? Here are five of Bagley books I recommend:

Blood of the Prophets: Brigham Young and the Massacre at Mountain Meadows (University of Oklahoma Press, 2002)

So Rugged and Mountainous: Blazing the Trails to Oregon and California, 1812–1848, Volume I, Overland West: The Story of the Oregon and California Trails (University of Oklahoma Press, 2010)

The Mormon Rebellion: America's First Civil War with David L. Bigler (University of Oklahoma Press, 2011)

With Golden Visions Bright Before Them: Trails to the Mining West, 1849–1852, Volume II, Overland West: The Story of the Oregon and California Trails (University of Oklahoma Press, 2012)

South Pass: Gateway to a Continent (University of Oklahoma Press, 2014)

–Stuart Rosebrook

A Gun that Won the West

Sharps Firearms, The Percussion Era, 1848-1865, Volume I, (Northwood Heritage Press, $100) covers these historic guns in a way they've never before been documented. Years of detailed research, input from other arms scholars, and surveys of existing Sharps, by renowned authors Roy Marcot, Edward W. Marron, Jr. and Ron Paxton, have resulted in a work that spans the era from inventor Christian Sharps' earliest patent to the last of the percussion models. Details on design elements, contracts, production figures and more, including Confederate copies and Sharps ammunition, are included in an easily read, interesting format. This highly illustrated, full-color, 10¼-inch by 12¼-inch, 439-page hardcover volume will un-doubtedly stand as the last word in scholarly re-search of Sharps percussion longarms.

—Phil Spangenberger,
True West's *Firearms Editor*

A Tragic Hero

Meriwether Lewis is the subject of Patricia Tyson Stroud's magnificent biography *Bitterroot: The Life and Death of Meriwether Lewis* (University of Pennsylvania Press, $39.95). Stroud explains that Lewis had a "remarkable grasp of natural science" and was inspired by faith, respect and love. One considerable topic covered by Stroud in her book is whether or not Lewis committed suicide along Natchez Trace in Tennessee. "That Lewis died a violent death is incontrovertible," Stroud writes. "Though the facts surrounding his demise are far from clear." With the careful consideration of a seasoned historian, Stroud fleshes out the life—and the man. Who was Meriwether Lewis? A tragic figure? Sure. A man driven to suicide? Probably not, at least according to Stroud.

—Erik Wright, author of West of Hell: The Badmen, Hardcases & Intrepid Lawmen Who Made the West Wild

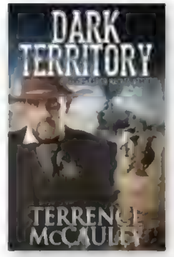
Brigham Young, Not Revealed

Readers expecting a balanced treatment of Brigham Young, an outsized character in the settlement of the West by any measure, will likely be disappointed with Thomas G. Alexander's *Brigham Young and the Expansion of the Mormon Faith* (University of Oklahoma Press, $29.95). The author covers in detail Young's noteworthy exploits, but barely touches on or ignores many controversial aspects. Anyone with a gripe is labeled "anti-Mormon" and the legitimacy of their reasons for challenging Young disregarded. Too much of the alphabet is wasted on explanations of Mormon history and doctrine that wander off the trail of Brigham Young's life and accomplishments. While the author is an academic historian of some note, by his own admission in the introduction, his heart may not have been in this work.

—Rod Miller, author of Father Unto Many Sons

Guns Ablaze

Terrence McCauley's new Western novel, *Dark Territory* (Pinnacle, $7.99). comes out guns blazing from the very first page and doesn't let up until the action-packed finale. In the fictionalized boomtown of Dover Station, Montana, a rash of train robberies raises Sheriff Aaron Mackey's suspicion and he quickly sets out to lay down the law. McCauley does an expert job of weaving suspense and intrigue into this traditional Western tale. Along with the enjoyable Western tropes, McCauley incorporates elements of a good old-fashioned mystery that make this book a real page-turner. *Territory* is a fun read I highly recommend to any fan of the genre.



—Kellen Cutsforth, author of Buffalo Bill, Boozers, Brothels, and Bare-Knuckle Brawlers: An Englishman's Journal of Adventure in America

TEXAS AUTHOR'S FAVORITE LONE STAR READS

Vicky J. Rose writes Western fiction under the pseudonyms V. J. Rose and Easy Jackson for Kensington, Wolfpack and Five-Star. She grew up listening to stories about outlaw gangs, hangings and vigilantes that happened in and around her small Central Texas town. Devoted to history, she tries to add the flavor of the Old West into everything she writes. She recommends these books about Texas.

❶ ***The Trail Drivers of Texas*** edited by J. Marvin Hunter (University of Texas Press): Other authors have accused Larry McMurtry of lifting everything out of this book and putting it into *Lonesome Dove*. Darn right, and that's the reason Larry won a Pulitzer with it. It's the real stuff.

❷ ***The Longhorns*** by J. Frank Dobie: Dobie comes off with a superior attitude that irks me sometimes, but he tells colorful stories. Any library with a Dobie book in it will be better for it.

❸ ***Some More Horse Tradin'*** by Ben K. Green (Bison Books): He pretended to be a licensed veterinarian when he wasn't, and he could stretch the truth nine ways till Sunday, but I've had more than one old rancher tell me, "He knew horses."

❹ ***The Old Chisholm Trail: From Cow Path to Tourist Stop*** by Wayne Ludwig (Texas A&M Press): I recommend anyone interested in writing about cattle drives look at this first to get a good overview before diving into the others.

❺ ***Big Bend: A Homesteader's Story*** by J.O. Langford with Fred Gipson (University of Texas Press): Anyone interested in that vast and wild area where the Rio Grande makes a big bend will be touched by this simple story with its thoughtful insights.

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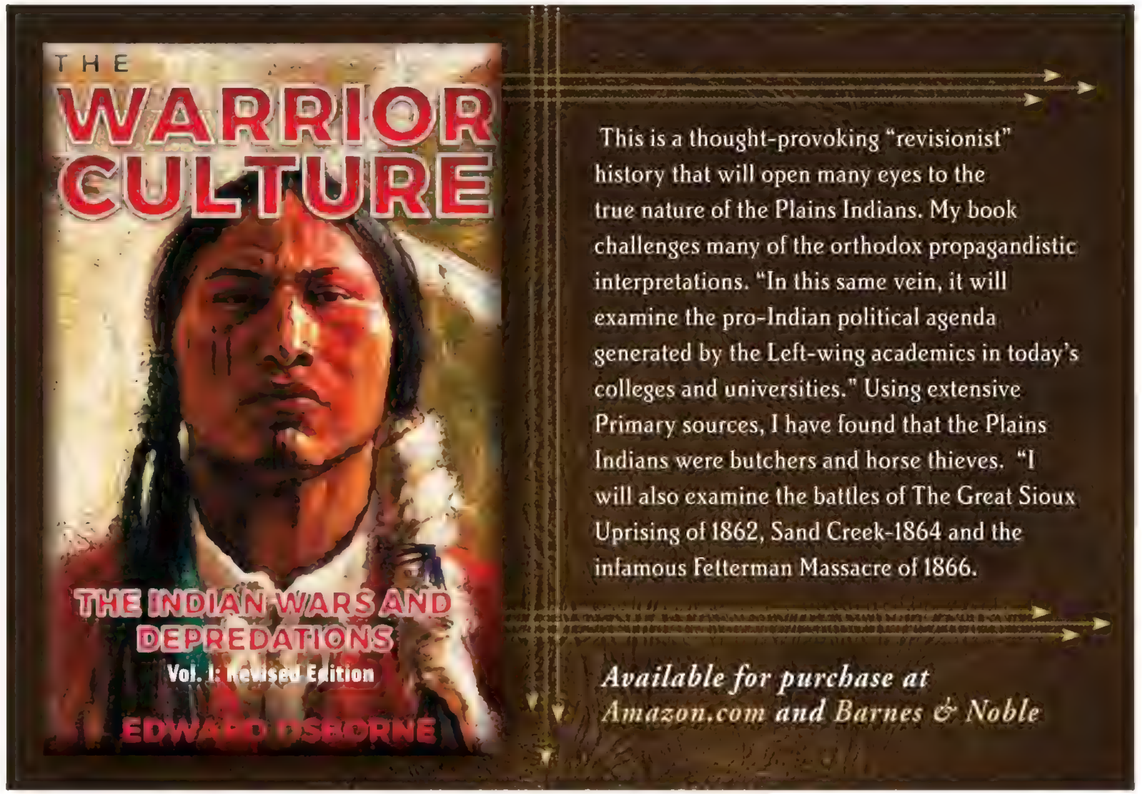


This is a thought-provoking "revisionist" history that will open many eyes to the true nature of the Plains Indians. My book challenges many of the orthodox propagandistic interpretations. "In this same vein, it will examine the pro-Indian political agenda generated by the Left-wing academics in today's colleges and universities." Using extensive Primary sources, I have found that the Plains Indians were butchers and horse thieves. "I will also examine the battles of The Great Sioux Uprising of 1862, Sand Creek-1864 and the infamous Fetterman Massacre of 1866.

Available for purchase at Amazon.com and Barnes & Noble

BY HENRY C. PARKE

Stagecoach– The Legend At 80

John Ford and John Wayne's classic Western film changed the course of cinema history.

In 1938, John Ford assembled a veteran ensemble cast, including George Bancroft as Marshal Curley Wilcox (left) and Louise Platt as Mrs. Lucy Mallory (right) to support B-movie cowboy John Wayne as the Ringo Kid (center) in *Stagecoach*. Ford's storytelling, casting, direction and use of iconic locations, such as Monument Valley, coalesced into a cinematic classic that brought the A-Western back into studio production—and made Wayne a movie star.

– ALL IMAGES COURTESY UNITED ARTISTS UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED –

Eighty years ago, director John Ford and screenwriter Dudley Nichols combined their talents, and those of star character-actors Claire Trevor, Thomas Mitchell, John Carradine and newcomer John Wayne, and made *Stagecoach*, a movie that would forever alter Western film history. It's been called the *Citizen Kane* of Westerns—ironic, since *Stagecoach* preceded *Kane* by two years. Yet it's an apt comparison, because those films changed the future of movies, not by an innovation easy to point out, like Technicolor or 3D, but by utilizing all of the aspects of the filmmakers' arts to tell stories perfectly.

John Ford had been directing films since 1917, beginning with the silent Western three-reeler, *The Tornado*, and had made nearly 60 Westerns since then. In 1939, with his first of four Oscars under his belt for 1936's *The Informer*, he could work anywhere he wanted, with studio bosses like Daryl Zanuck and David O. Selznick happy to bankroll any project he'd like. Only now he wanted to make a Western, a genre he hadn't touched in 13 years, since his silent hit *3 Bad Men*, which he would remake in 1948 as *3 Godfathers*.

"John Ford was my teacher. My own style has nothing to do with his, but Stagecoach was my movie textbook. I ran it over 40 times."

–Orson Welles

Dan Ford, John Ford's grandson, says, "He always preferred to work from shorter projects and expand them, rather than work from novels and cut them down. A lot of his movies came from *The Saturday Evening Post* or *Colliers* magazines." Ford's son Patrick had read the Ernest Haycox story *Stage to Lordsburg* in *Colliers*, and told his father it might make a good movie.

Rarely read today, Haycox was a very popular, very driven Western author in his day, who started in the pulps but, as Haycox biographer Richard Etulain puts it, "took the Western out of the 'pulps' and took it into the 'slicks'," that is, higher-quality magazines printed on smoother paper. Growing up poor in Oregon, Haycox, like so many of his characters "had hardscrabble origins. He's virtually an orphan by the time he's 10, out on the street, selling newspapers." In his mid-teens he lied about his age to join the Army, and fought under Pershing against Pancho Villa on the Mexican border. He fought in World War I, then graduated from The University of Oregon in 1923 with a bachelor's degree in journalism. Ernest Hemingway once noted, "I read *The Saturday Evening Post* whenever it has a serial by Ernest Haycox."

Filmmakers and cinema historians credit John Ford's *Stagecoach* for launching the A-Western as an internationally recognized American art form.

John Ford's decision to film parts of *Stagecoach* on location in Monument Valley, Utah and Arizona, launched a legacy that included nine movies—five with leading man John Wayne—and the creation of the most iconic film location in Western cinema history.

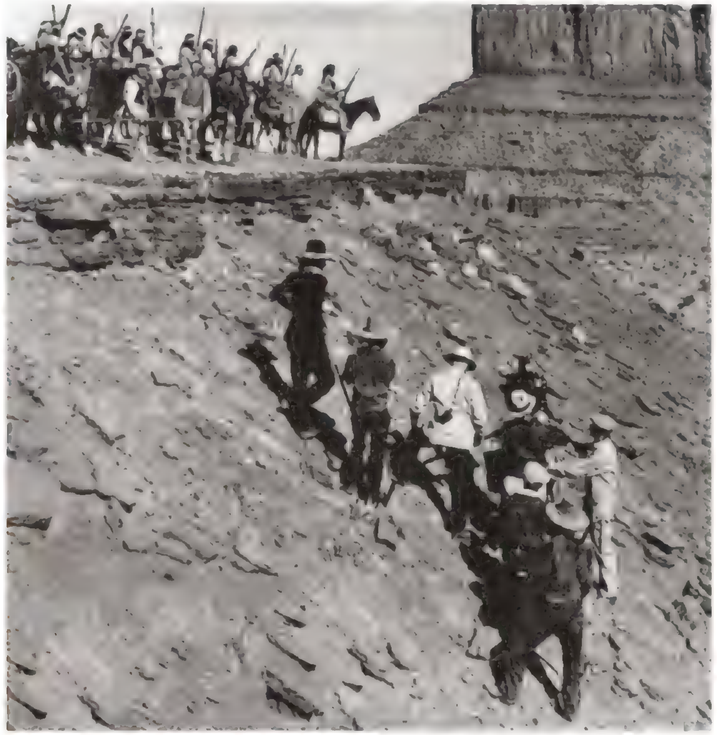
The premise of Haycox's story is simple: a group of strangers boards a stagecoach to Lordsburg, and a series of unexpected challenges, including an attack by Apaches, reveals who rises to the occasion, and who does not.

The usual price for film rights to a *Colliers* story was $1,100, but Ford paid $2,500 for *Stage to Lordsburg*. When he tried to set it up at a studio, Ford came up against two powerful objections: it was a Western, and he insisted on casting an unknown in a pivotal role. The once-popular Western genre had fallen out of favor, except with rural and juvenile audiences. In 1930, Fox had spent $2 million making a Western epic, *The Big Trail*, shot in a new process called Grandeur. Unfortunately, during the Great Depression, exhibitors who had just spent a fortune converting their theaters to play "talkies" had no interest in spending another fortune to convert to wide-screen. Except for in a handful of theaters, the movie played in standard, square 35mm, and it bombed.

The virtually unknown actor Ford wanted to feature was a former college athlete and prop man who had accidently wandered into a scene Ford was directing, startling Ford with how photogenic he was. He was groomed by Ford, given small bits in films until he suddenly got a big break and was cast as the lead in *The Big Trail*. His name had been Marion Morrison, but they'd changed it to John Wayne. And now Ford wanted Wayne to star in *Stagecoach*.

"I don't think anybody blames a $75-a-week actor when a $2 million picture goes down in flames," Ford and Wayne biographer Scott Eyman points out. But Wayne had begun

Since its release in 1939, director John Ford's ensemble classic *Stagecoach* has inspired generations of directors—from Alfred Hitchcock to Quentin Tarantino— to make ensemble-cast, character study action-thrillers. The cast of *Stagecoach* from l.-r.: Donald Meek, John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Andy Devine, George Bancroft, Louise Pratt, Tim Holt, John Carradine, Berton Churchill, Francis Ford and Thomas Mitchell.

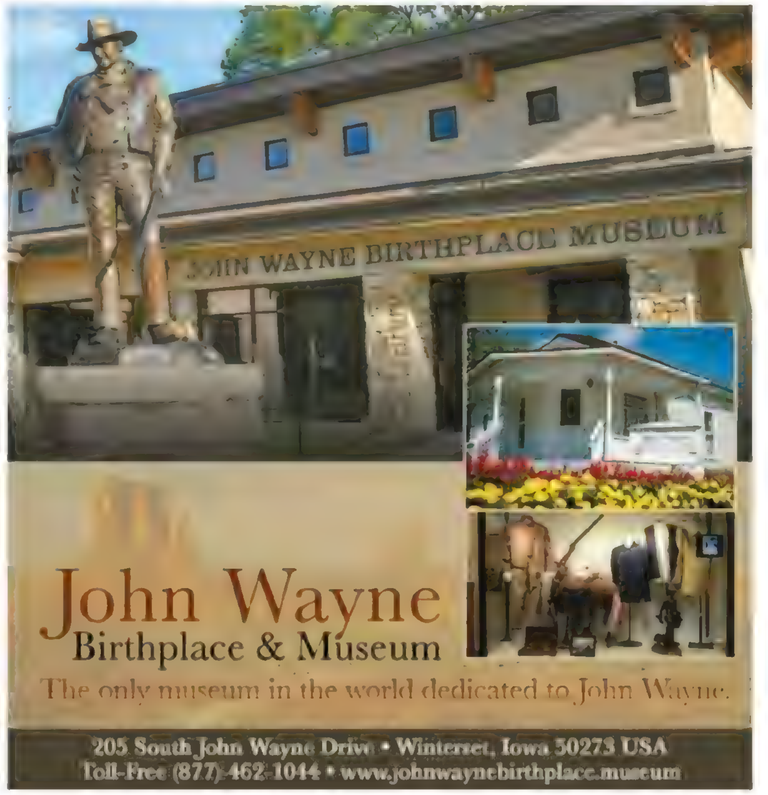


Director John Ford began his long relationship with the Navajo tribe when he filmed *Stagecoach* in Monument Valley in 1938. Ford cast dozens of Navajo riders as "Apaches" and mixed them with professional stunt men for the Indian action scenes in the groundbreaking Western.

starring in B-Westerns and he was "damaged goods as far as they were concerned. After you failed at Fox, you were exiled to Monogram and Republic, and you never got back. It was like Devil's Island." Wayne would star in 33 B-Westerns in nine years, until John Ford called. He never did a B-picture again.

Selznick was willing to produce the film, but he wanted stars with big enough names to ensure a profit. Why not Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich, instead of Wayne and Trevor? Even though Claire Trevor had been Oscar-nominated in 1937 for *Dead End* (she'd win in '48 for *Key Largo*), she was seen as a B-movie star. But Ford held firm, and the film was eventually put together, Ford's way, with independent producer Walter Wanger at United Artists.

Dudley Nichols had won an Oscar for *The Informer*, and would collaborate with Ford on 16 movies. What he did so masterfully in adapting *Stage to Lordsburg* was to add urgency, to up the ante for the characters, making them individuals instead of types. No longer just a gambler, John Carradine's character is a ruined Southern gentleman hiding his shame, and eager for a chance to regain his dignity. The Army Girl (Louise Platt) is no longer going to meet her fiancé; she is now Mrs. Lucy Mallory and married to an officer, and about to give birth. Thomas Mitchell's character is no longer just a drunk; he's a drunk *doctor*, and will have to deliver Mrs. Mallory's baby. Malpais Bill, now the Ringo Kid, is still on his way to Lordsburg for revenge on Luke Plummer, played by Tom Tyler, but now Ringo is an escaped convict, and the sheriff (George Bancroft) is along for the ride. Henriette, now Dallas, would never tell Ringo, as in the short story, "I run a house in Lordsburg." Her greatest fear is that he will learn this about her. Now the whiskey drummer (Donald Meek) survives, the Englishman is dropped, the cattleman is turned into the embezzling banker (Berton Churchill). About the only character that hardly changes is the driver, Happy, now Buck portrayed by Andy Devine, becomes that much more of a welcome comedy relief figure.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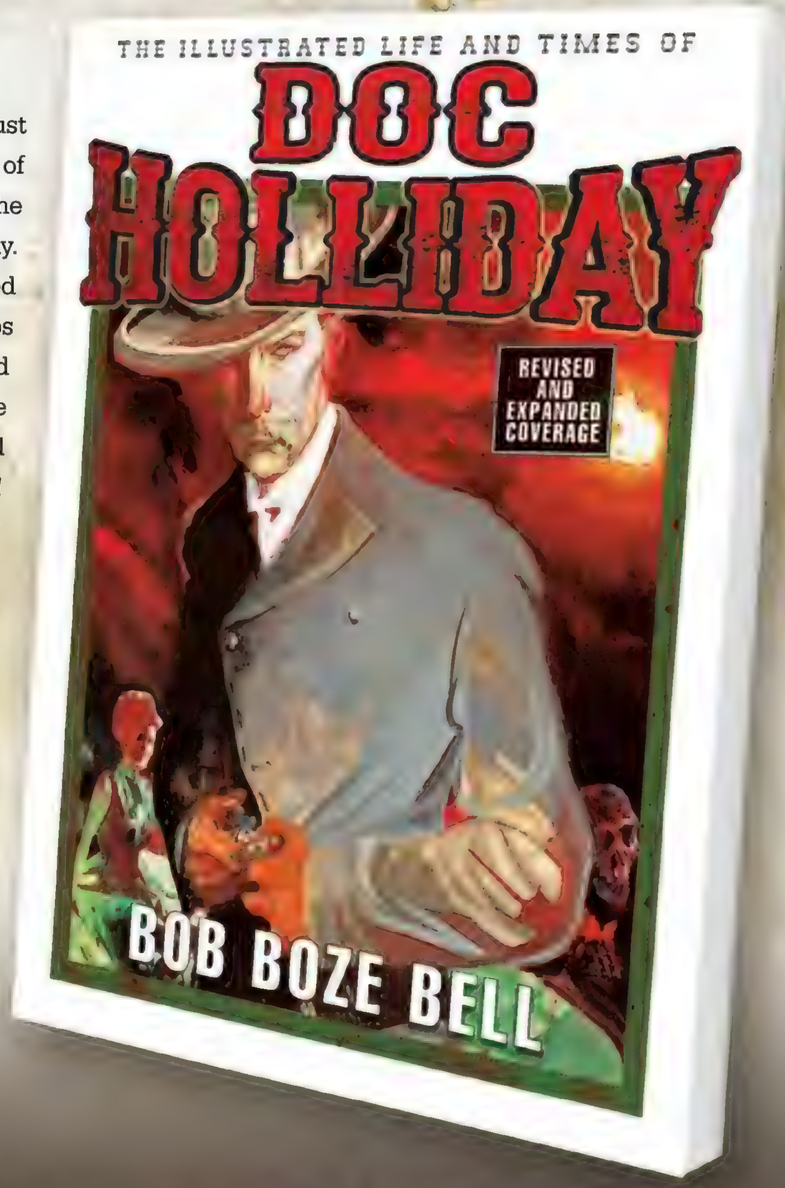

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ADVENTURE
Cumbres & Toltec Railroad p. 86
O.K. Corral p. 4

APPAREL/ACCES.
Catalena Hatters p. 92
Golden Gate Western Wear p. 92
Historic Eyewear Company p. 92
Wild West Mercantile p. 2

ART & COLLECTIBLES
John Wayne An American Hero Replica Knife p. 15
Heritage Auctions Galleries p. 51

EVENTS
11th Annual Grand Canyon Celebration of Art p. 17
Apacheland/Heritage Days p. 84
Art of the West Auction p. 51
Empire Ranch Cowboy Festival p. 57
O.K. Corral Shootout Reenactment p. 4

FIREARMS/KNIVES
Buffalo Arms Company p. 62
E.M.F. Company, Inc. p. 55
Henry GB .22LR Rifle with Butch Cassidy and the Wild Bunch p. 6
Heroes & Patriots Collectible Firearms p. 6
Old West Reproductions p. 54
The Hawken Shop p. 62

HOME
Old West Signs p. 92
Western Star Leather p. 92

LODGING
Big Cedar Lodge p. IFC
The Occidental Hotel & Saloon p. 89
Wind River Hotel and Casino p. 50

MEDIA
Louis L'Amour Trading Post p. 92
The Warrior Culture: The Indian Wars and Depredations by Edward Osborne p. 59

MUSEUMS
Ancient Ozarks Natural History Museum p. IFC
Buffalo Bill Center of the West p. 7
Campbell County Rockpile Museum p. 78
Crook County Museum District p. 91
Deadwood History Inc p. 91
Desert Caballeros Western Museum p. 88
Fort Smith Museum of History p. 84
Galveston Railroad Museum p. 85
Harold Warp Pioneer Village p. 81
Hastings Museum of Natural & Cultural History p. 80
Hutchinson County Historical Museum p. 77
Jesse James Farm & Museum p. 87
John Wayne Birthplace & Museum p. 63
Joslyn Art Museum p. 85
Kenedy Ranch Museum p. 82
Knight Museum & Sandhills Center p. 88
Mahaffie Stagecoach Stop & Farm Historic Site p. 87
Museum of the American Railroad p. 81
Museum of the Big Bend p. 83
National Mining Hall of Fame & Museum p. 82
Nevada State Museums p. 75
Northeastern Nevada Museum p. 89
O.K. Corral p. 4
Olaf Wieghorst Museum p. 84
Old Cowtown Museum p. 81
Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum p. 83
Patee House Museum p. 71
Pawnee Bill Ranch & Museum p. 86
Pony Express Museum p. 71
Prescott Museums p. 5
Prescott Western Heritage Center p. 80
Saint Joseph Historical Society p. 71
Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer p. 85
Superstition Mountain Museum p. 84
Texas Ranger Hall of Fame and Museum p. 84
The Brinton Museum p. 78
The Dalton Defenders & Coffeyville History Museum p. 89
Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West p. BC

TOURISM
Antonito, CO p. 86
Carbon County p. 76
Chama Valley Chamber of Commerce p. 54
Smithville, MO p. 87
Coffeyville, KS p. 89
Converse County Tourism p. 90
Fort Larned p. 82
Larned, KS p. 85
Pecos, TX p. 3
Prescott, AZ p. 5
Scottsbluff/Gering, NE p. 88
St. Joseph, MO p. 68
State of Nevada p. 75
Tonopah, NV p. 51
Trinidad, CO p. 1

OTHER
Melanoma Kills p. 54
Classic Gunfights Book Series by Bob Boze Bell p. 57
The Illustrated Life & Times of Doc Holliday by Bob Boze Bell p. 64
True West Billy The Kid Collectors Set p. 95
True West Lifetme Maniac p. 58
True West Mountain Men Collectors Set p. 49
True West T-Shirts p. 82
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TRUE WEST

In 1966, 20th Century-Fox released the first remake of John Ford's *Stagecoach*. The big-budget, star-studded studio spectacle did not inspire audiences and many wondered why it was made in the first place.

– COURTESY 20TH CENTURY-FOX –

When John Wayne came over from Republic, he brought with him Yakima Canutt, arguably the greatest stunt man who ever lived. Most of the convincing fight scenes performed in films since the mid-1930s are based on techniques Canutt and Wayne developed while working together on poverty row.

The exterior stagecoach shots were filmed first, in what would become John Ford's personal trademark, Monument Valley. The exteriors for the opening town of Tonto and closing town of Lordsburg were both shot at Republic Studios. The end was originally planned for daylight, but was changed to night to hide the fact that it was the same town, and the night-for-night photography is wonderfully pre-noir noir.

One of the key sequences, where the stage stop is found burned to the ground, and a river must be crossed to escape the Apaches (played by Navajos), was filmed on the Kern River.

The climactic chase, with Apaches tearing after the coach, was shot over three days at Mojave Desert's Lucerne Dry Lake Bed, where Ford had previously filmed the land rush sequence for *3 Bad Men*. The chase is an astonishing collaboration of the skills of Ford and Canutt.

The film was completed for just under $550,000, four days over the 43-day shooting schedule. Ford was paid $50,000, less than his then-current rate. Trevor, at $15,000, was the highest-paid cast member, with Wayne, at $3,700, the second lowest, making $34 more than Carradine.

The aftermath of *Stagecoach* is well known. It made John Wayne a star. Wayne and Ford would have a legendary collaboration on a dozen more films, some of the most highly regarded movies in film history. Grandson Dan Ford reveals another outcome of the success. "It was important to [Ford] because he had a big piece of *Stagecoach*, a big money-maker, and it sustained his family for the war years, so he could go off in the Navy." Ford, who saw trouble coming earlier than most Americans, enlisted before the Pearl Harbor attack and went overseas, often handling cameras on the front lines. He achieved the rank of Rear Admiral and made about a dozen military films, covering subjects as varied as The Battle of Midway and sex hygiene.

Claire Trevor had a splendid career as a leading lady in A movies, and a long and happy marriage. Thomas Mitchell had an unbelievable 1939, starring in not only *Stagecoach*, but *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* and *Gone With the Wind*. He won the Best Supporting Actor Oscar for *Stagecoach*, and receiving the award, commented, "I didn't think… I didn't *know* I was quite that good."

It was also a wonderful year for Ernest Haycox. In addition to *Stagecoach*, his novel *Trouble Shooters* became *Union Pacific*, directed by Cecil B. deMille, and starring Joel McCrea and Barbara Stanwyck. He was brought out to Hollywood to be a screenwriter, but didn't care for it, and soon returned to Oregon, where he wrote successful novels and over 300 short stories. Seven movies were made from his stories in his lifetime. He died at the age of 51 in 1950, and his widow lived a comfortable life licensing his stories to films and television, and reportedly watched endless hours of Western TV to make sure his stories *weren't* being used for free.

Considering how successful *Stagecoach* was, and how inexpensive shooting endless stagecoach interiors is, it's surprising it hasn't been more frequently imitated. But what it requires is great writing and great acting, and that's rarely cheap. In 1951's *Rawhide*, Tyrone Power and Susan Hayward are menaced at a stagecoach stop, which certainly has similarities to *Stagecoach*, as do virtually all of the Randolph Scott/Budd Boetticher films of the 1960s.

Director Quentin Tarantino, famous for his encyclopedic knowledge of film history and incorporation of classic cinema motifs into his own films, used John Ford's *Stagecoach* and Henry Hathaway's *Rawhide* as inspiration for his violent character-study *The Hateful Eight*. In an additional nod to Ford and Hathaway, Tarantino took his film cast and crew on location to shoot his movie, going so far as to use the Ultra Panavision 70 to capture the classic wide-angle cinematography that Ford and Hathaway used so effectively in their own films.

– COURTESY THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY –

Other influences are not so obvious. Eyman asks, "Would Alfred Hitchcock's *Lifeboat* exist without *Stagecoach*? [It's] *Stagecoach* on the water, basically." To be fair, others have claimed that *Stagecoach* is just *Grand Hotel* on wheels, but of course, without Apaches.

On television, the economy of the set-up inspired episodes of many series, including *The Rebel*, *Cheyenne* and *The Rifleman*. In fact, Quentin Tarantino explained to *Deadline Hollywood* that these cut-rate *Stagecoaches*, particularly *The Virginian*, *Bonanza* and *The High Chaparral*, were his inspiration for *The Hateful Eight*. "Twice per season, those shows would have an episode where a bunch of outlaws would… come to the Ponderosa, or go to Judge Garth's place… and take hostages. There would be a guest star like David Carradine, Darren McGavin, Claude Akins, Robert Culp, Charles Bronson or James Coburn. I thought, 'What if I did a movie starring nothing but those characters? No heroes, no Michael Landons. Just a bunch of nefarious guys in a room, all telling backstories that may or may not be true. Trap those guys together in a room with a blizzard outside, give them guns and see what happens.'" In 2018, the final segment of the Coen Brothers' *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs*, "The Mortal Remains," is an even more direct descendent of *Stagecoach*.

The Mortal Remains," starring (l.-r.) Saul Rubenik, Tyne Daly and Chelcie Ross, is a supernatural homage to the original *Stagecoach*. The short is the final chapter in Joel and Ethan Coen's unique Western chapter-film, *The Ballad of Buster Scruggs* (2018).

Then there were the remakes. In 1966, 20th Century-Fox released its new take on *Stagecoach*, directed by Gordon Douglas, who'd started directing *Our Gang* comedies, and helmed highly regarded Westerns like *Rio Conchos* (1964). Ann-Margaret is Dallas, Alex Cord is Ringo, with Oscar-winner Red Buttons filling in for Donald Meek, Mike Connors for Carradine, Bing Crosby for Mitchell, and Slim Pickens for Andy Devine. Fox's executives spent money on this one: the action is longer and bloodier, the locations are beautiful, and they even commissioned Norman Rockwell to paint one of the handsomest movie posters ever made. They made a film that's adequate if you haven't seen the original, but tedious if you have.

And perhaps the studio bosses knew it. As Pauline Kael noted, "Probably in no other art except movies can new practitioners legally eliminate competition from the past. A full-page notice in *Variety* gave warning that 20th Century Fox…"would 'vigorously' prosecute the exhibition of the 1939 original… one of the most highly regarded and influential movies ever made." Or as John Carradine told *Hollywood Snapshots* author Michael B. Druxman, "They deserved to lose their shirts on the remake. Nobody could have been better than John Wayne, Berton Churchill, Thomas Mitchell or me. Great classics should never be remade."

The 1986 version of *Stagecoach* is far worse, sadly, as it might have been wonderful. Starring Willie Nelson, Kris Kristofferson, Johnny Cash and Waylon Jennings, it was planned as a musical, with songs by Willie Nelson. Then half the budget disappeared, and except for the theme by Nelson, the music was never recorded. Kristofferson remembers, "It had a lot of trouble getting started, and we ended up in the stagecoach for most of it." A brief appearance by Lash LaRue toward the end was the only link to a real Western.

Claire Trevor told Druxman, "*Stagecoach* was the only thing I've ever done that couldn't have been done in another medium. It used the motion picture camera and music, folk songs with symphonic arrangements, that, up to that time, had never been done before." She said it best.

True West Film Editor **Henry C. Parke**, namesake of his grandfather who, like Ernest Haycox, fought with Black Jack Pershing against Pancho Villa, recently did audio commentary on the Signal One Blu-ray of the 1966 *Stagecoach* remake.

Nearly 50 years after the original *Stagecoach*, CBS television cast Kris Kristofferson in John Wayne's role as the Ringo Kid. The third version of the Western classic in 1986 also starred fellow country artists Johnny Cash, Waylon Jennings and Willie Nelson.

– COURTESY CBS TELEVISION –

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BY LEO W. BANKS

St. Joseph, Missouri

History is alive in the historic home of the Pony Express and Jesse James.

The National Pony Express Museum, the centerpiece of the historic district of St. Joseph, Missouri, depicts the dramatic story of the young Pony Express riders (inset, clockwise from top left) Billy Richardson, Johnny Fry, Gus Cliff and Charlie Cliff. Fry was the legendary mail service's first rider of the first leg on April 3, 1860.

– HISTORIC PHOTO COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES/ PONY EXPRESS MUSEUM COURTESY ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI, CVB –

Fur trapper Joseph Robidoux founded this town on the Missouri River in 1843, and westbound travel helped it grow. Emigrants stopped here by the thousands to buy supplies, their wagons crowding the streets as they waited to be ferried across the river and continue their treks.

But for modern travelers, Jesse James and the Pony Express draw most of the attention.

The Pony Express National Museum offers a terrific venue to relive the bravery of the young men who made breakneck rides from St. Joseph to Sacramento and back.

When visitors step inside the refurbished Pony Express stables, a sensor triggers a recording telling the story of Johnny Fry. To the sound of a cannon blast, he rode out of the stable at 7:15 p.m. on April 3, 1860, beginning the Pony Express era, which lasted only 18 months.

See life-size figures of Fry, his father and another man preparing to open the stable door. One museum room has multiple panels with information about heroes like Bronco Charlie. He started as a substitute rider for Pony Express at age 11 and became the last living former rider, dying at age 105.

In 1860, the first floor of Patee House Museum, now a National Historic Landmark, served as the Pony Express's headquarters.

After Bob Ford killed Jesse James in St. Joseph in 1882, the outlaw's family spent two nights at Patee House, then called World's Hotel. The home in which Jesse was shot, originally two blocks away, was moved to the Patee House lot in 1977.

The life and death of Missouri outlaw Jesse James (inset) are recounted and celebrated at the Jesse James Home museum in St. Joseph. Bob Ford infamously shot James in the back of the head in the house on April 3, 1882.

– PHOTO OF JESSE JAMES HOME COURTESY ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI, CVB/JESSE JAMES PHOTO COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

Visitors see a tie pin Jesse wore the day of his murder, a bullet removed from his right lung (but not from the Ford shooting) and a skull casting showing the fatal bullet hole behind his right ear.

"People thrill to stand where Jesse stood, where he lived and where he died," says Patee House Museum Business Manager Lauren Green.

To tour a remarkable structure, see the 43-room Wyeth-Tootle Mansion, completed in 1879 in the Italianate style with a Gothic influence to resemble the castles businessman William Wyeth saw in Germany.

It features ceiling paintings and a stunning stained-glass window on a staircase. See a Pony Express rider's saddle and a model of Robidoux working on a pelt.

St. Joseph hosts several fun annual events. The weekend-long Apple Blossom Festival in May, ongoing for 95 years, includes a parade and barbecue contest among chefs who take barbecue very seriously.

Pumpkin Fest in October features the creation of the Great Pumpkin Mountain in which 800 carved and electrically lit pumpkins are piled onto a scaffold.

"When they're lit up all at once, it gives everybody goose bumps," says Beth Conway, communications director at St. Joseph Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Check the show schedule at Missouri Theatre, which opened on June 25, 1927, with Clara Bow starring in the silent picture, *Rough House Rosie*. Now a performing arts center, this former movie palace has been renovated to resemble its art deco and Moorish beginnings and is often called a piece of art itself.

The 13,000-square-foot Remington Nature Center explains the Missouri River's importance in regional development and showcases American Indian artifacts. See a replica wooly mammoth.

The Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art holds one of the Midwest's best collections of American art, with works by Robert Henri and Edward Hopper. It has Thomas Hart Benton's piece, *Custer's Last Stand*.

Downtown St. Joseph is a great place to walk, rich with shops, restaurants, a rotating sculpture display and outdoor murals. One of the largest, "Queen of the River Towns, King of the Trails," depicts wagon trains and settlers. It spans most of a city block and exceeds 100 feet in height.

FUN FACT: St. Joseph's downtown streets are named for Robidoux's eight children—Faraon, Jules, Francis, Felix, Edmond, Charles, Sylvanie and Messanie. One street is named for his wife, Angelique. ✪

Leo W. Banks is an award-winning writer based in Tucson. He is the author of the mystery novel, *Double Wide*.

– MAP BY KEVIN KIBSEY –

WHERE HISTORY MEETS THE HIGHWAY

St. Joseph's Albrecht-Kemper Museum of Art has a renowned collection of Western American art.

– COURTESY ST. JOSEPH, MISSOURI, CVB –

VISITOR INFORMATION CENTER

To start your trip, stop at the St. Joseph Convention & Visitors Bureau, 911 Frederick Ave.

STJOMO.com

PATEE HOUSE MUSEUM AND JAMES HOME

Originally built in 1858 as a luxury hotel, with hot and cold running water, the building later became a courtroom for the trial of Confederate officers, a women's college and a garment factory. It was designated a National Historic Landmark in 1965.

PonyExpressJesseJames.com

GLORE PSYCHIATRIC MUSEUM

The museum chronicles the history of the 1874 St. Joseph State Lunatic Asylum No. 2, where a patient swallowed 453 nails. See an exhibit on this, er, indigestion-inducing feat. Named one of the country's 50 most unusual museums, it has been featured in national outlets like The Discovery Channel and Learning Channel.

StJosephMuseum.org

PONY EXPRESS NATIONAL MUSEUM

Buffalo Bill Cody promoted the Pony Express in his Wild West shows. See the printed program from his farewell show and watch video of Bill performing. Executive Director Cindy Daffron says a popular attraction is the original 1858 well used to water Pony Express horses. "It's still operational and people love to work the old-fashioned hand pump," she says.

PonyExpress.org

MOUNT MORA CEMETERY

Held annually amid October's twilight chill and complete with spooky candles, this 1851 cemetery hosts a living history program, Voices from the Past, in which volunteers re-enact stories of people buried there. These include two Pony Express riders, two of Quantrill's Raiders and the physicians attending Jesse James's autopsy.

MountMora.com

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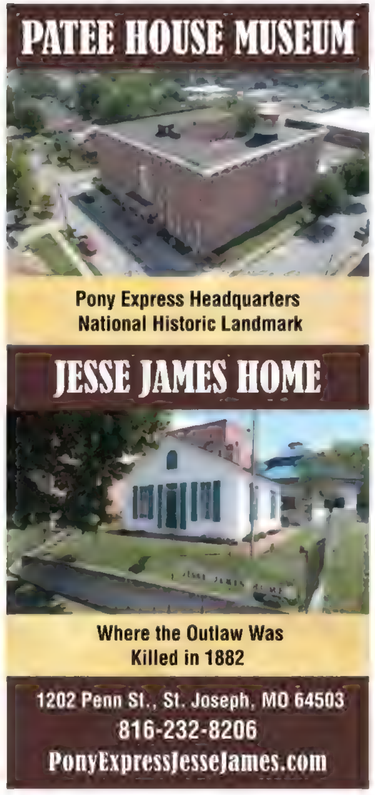

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BY CANDY MOULTON

TRADITIONS OF THE WEST

Discover the best of our collective Western culture in the exhibits at the top museums of 2019.

Museums are recognizing, celebrating and interpreting the traditions of the American West through exhibits that are anything but traditional as they combine art and photography with storytelling and artifacts. Whether the subject is cowboy gear or prehistoric homelands or the trickster stories of coyote or the legends of the OK Corral or Deadwood, there is a story for everyone.

Developing new museum exhibits is a long process, and the reimaging of a major institution is even more challenging. But when all the planning and fundraising are complete, when the exhibits are built, the films finalized and the artifacts in their new cases, the result is something to celebrate. Significant projects during the past year include Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West's repositioning its marketing, permanent and rotating exhibitions under the new theme "See the West from a Whole New Perspective;" the opening of new galleries at the Cody Firearms Museum; and at the Cowboy Arts and Gear Museum in Elko, housed in the saddle shop and home of legendary silversmith G.S. Garcia.

We've visited museums all across the West, even as far north as Alaska, to bring you this year's Best of the Western Museums.

1 **WESTERN SPIRIT: SCOTTSDALE'S MUSEUM OF THE WEST, SCOTTSDALE, AZ:** The museum's curators want visitors to "see the West from a whole new perspective," and they deliver. In addition to the ongoing exhibits of cowboy gear and ranch artifacts, the museum featured exhibitions titled "New Beginnings: An American Story of Romantics and Modernists in the West" and "Will James Cowboy Artist and Author." Watch for "Paul Calle's Life of Exploration: From the Mountains to the Moon," coming in February 2020.
ScottsdaleMuseumWest.org

2 **BUFFALO BILL CENTER OF THE WEST CODY, WY:** The July opening of the redesigned Cody Firearms Museum squarely places the BBCOW on our top museum list. Years in the making, the firearms museum still features its extensive collections of weapons, but they are presented in new exhibits allowing visitors to see the guns and learn more about their designs and production.
CenterOfTheWest.org

3 **PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM, CANYON, TX:** What's not to like about a museum that has on display a Fox F grade shotgun owned by Theodore Roosevelt? The gun was given to Roosevelt and he used it on an African safari. In 2010 it was purchased by Jason Roselius for $862,500 and placed on loan to the PPHM this year.
PanhandlePlains.org

Since its opening in 2015, **Western Spirit: Scottsdale's Museum of the West** (left and right) in Scottsdale, Arizona, has become a dynamic, creative leader in exhibitions interpreting the heritage and artistry of the American West.

– PHOTOS COURTESY WESTERN SPIRIT: SMOW –

Outside of the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., **The Buffalo Bill Center of the West**'s five-museum complex in Cody, Wyoming, stands singularly in the United States for the breadth and depth of its collections and exhibitions on the American West.

– COURTESY BBCW –

4 **BOOT HILL MUSEUM, DODGE CITY, KS**
Construction is underway on the new Boot Hill Museum, expected to open in 2020, but most areas of the existing museum are open, including the Long Branch Saloon, People of the Plains building, the Rath General Store, the First Union Church and the Beeson Gallery. ***BootHill.org***

5 **ADAMS MUSEUM, DEADWOOD, SD**
The new HBO movie *Deadwood* again places the legendary characters of this Black Hills gold rush town on televisions across the country, but at the Adams House Museum you can learn more about legendary characters Seth Bullock, Calamity Jane and Wild Bill Hickok. ***DeadwoodHistory.com***

6 **FORT SMITH MUSEUM OF HISTORY FORT SMITH, AR:** While most will want to see the courtroom of Judge Isaac Parker—the U.S. federal judge in the western District of Arkansas, who became known as "the hanging judge"—this site also is a place to walk a portion of the Cherokee Trail of Tears. ***NPS.gov***

7 **SHARLOT HALL PRESCOTT, AZ:** We love road-tripping to find the unique and historical spots and to identify museums that are offering outstanding exhibits, so the Willard J. Page "Artist on the Southwest Road" hits on all cylinders. Page and his wife, Ethel, took their "motor home" on the road in the early 1900s, traveling the Southwest. He set up easels on railroad platforms and painted the Southwest scenes he saw, selling the "baggage-sized" original oil paintings to train travelers. His work has been on display this year at Sharlot Hall. ***Sharlot.org***

The Panhandle-Plains Historical Museum (above) in Canyon, Texas, displays in-depth interpretations of the natural, cultural and settlement history of the Southern Plains region.

– COURTESY PANHANDLE-PLAINS HISTORICAL MUSEUM –

The Boot Hill Museum (left) in Dodge City, Kansas, is a living-history center that entertains visitors with live-action gunfighter events along Front Street, interactive Old West exhibitions in its museum and nightly entertainment in its re-created Long Branch Saloon.

– COURTESY BOOT HILL MUSEUM –

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COWBOYS, INDIANS, LAWMEN AND OUTLAWS

Kenedy Ranch Museum/Sarita, Texas

– CANDY MOULTON –

PAWNEE BILL RANCH & MUSEUM, PAWNEE, OK
Work continues to stabilize the mansion, which should reopen soon. This year the annual Wild West Show was delayed until July due to heavy rain earlier in the summer, but as Pawnee Bill might say, "The show must go on." ***OKHistory.org***

CHEYENNE FRONTIER DAYS OLD WEST MUSEUM CHEYENNE, WY: The photography and artwork of Lee Silliman is featured in "Homestead Fever: Celebrating the Early Settlers of the High Plains." ***CFDRodeo.com***

DAYS OF 76 MUSEUM, DEADWOOD, SD
Stagecoaches and the pioneer and Indian art and artifacts collected by Don Clower are among the items in this museum. ***DaysOf76.com***

REX ALLEN MUSEUM, WILLCOX, AZ: This museum highlights Rex Allen's lifetime in rodeo, radio, television and movies. ***RexAllenMuseum.org***

OLD COWTOWN MUSEUM, WICHITA, KS: Step back into the cattle drive era as you stroll the boardwalk lined with false-fronted buildings. ***OldCowtown.org***

O.K. CORRAL, TOMBSTONE, AZ: There is only one O.K. Corral and its stories are legendary; re-enactments are held daily. ***OKCorral.com***

KENEDY RANCH MUSEUM, SARITA, TX: The legacy of Mifflin Kenedy is richly told in the wall murals and other exhibits. ***KenedyRanchMuseum.org***

JESSE JAMES FARM & MUSEUM, KEARNEY, MO
While this is the Jesse James Farm and Museum, the stories extend to other members of the James family, including Frank and Annie. ***JesseJames.org***

TEXAS RANGERS HERITAGE CENTER FREDERICKSBURG, TX: The Heritage Center presented honorary captain commissions to Kevin Costner and Woody Harrelson for their roles in *The Highwaymen*. ***TRHC.org***

SCOTTSDALE RODEO MUSEUM, SCOTTSDALE, AZ
This new museum has never-before-seen artifacts of Scottsdale's rodeo history, including original Parada del Sol Rodeo posters, bull ropes and world champion saddles. ***OldTownScottsdaleAZ.com***

DALTON DEFENDER MUSEUM, COFFEYVILLE, KS
Court records of Emmett Dalton's trial and other Dalton Gang memorabilia are on display. ***Coffeyville.com***

GUNFIGHTER HALL OF FAME MUSEUM TOMBSTONE, AZ: The collection includes weapons and gunfighter artifacts. ***TombstoneWeb.com***

THE WRANGELL MUSEUM, WRANGELL, AK
Collections of Tlingit baskets and objects ranging from the original house poles from Chief Shakes' House to petroglyph rocks from along the island shoreline, and a blanket of importance to Chief Shakes IV, are among the significant objects displayed here. ***Wrangell.com***

MUSEUM OF NORTHWEST COLORADO, CRAIG, CO
Check out the new exhibit on Bob Meldrum and the remarkable collection of cowboy guns, spurs and leather objects. ***MuseumNWCO.org***

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The **Adams Museum** in Deadwood, South Dakota, is home to the largest and most important collection of the Black Hills gold-rush community. The museum's exhibitions provide in-depth interpretation of the famous, infamous and lesser-known men and women who settled and built the legendary Old West town.

– COURTESY SOUTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF TOURISM –

8 **TEXAS RANGERS MUSEUM & HALL OF FAME, WACO, TX**
The guns and other weapons used by the Texas Rangers are displayed along with weapons used against the Texas Rangers, including Lipan Apache arrows. This museum reflects two centuries of rangering, houses extensive archives and sponsors regular Ranger Talks featuring current and former Texas Rangers. And, yes, they all wear cowboy hats. ***TexasRanger.org***

9 **NELSON MUSEUM OF THE WEST CHEYENNE, WY:** From the high art of American Indians to military uniforms from the 19th-century cavalry to more recent soldiers, the Nelson's artifacts tell the stories of the West. Working with military commanders today, the museum also provides scholarships and support to military families. ***NelsonMuseum.com***

10 **JOHN WAYNE BIRTHPLACE MUSEUM, WINTERSET, IA**
For the Duke's birthday celebration this year the museum highlighted the 50th anniversary of his Academy Award-winning performance in *True Grit*. The museum has a collection of memorabilia from the actor's film career. ***JohnWayneBirthPlace.museum***

HUTCHINSON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Experience the Wild West at HCHM!

Between 1868 and 1881, the Great Plains had become *the* destination for daring young men headed west to seek their fortunes. Buffalo hunting nearly wiped out the species in the western United States. Destruction of the buffalo relegated the Plains Indians, once masters of their domain – to life on the reservation.

The Indians didn't give up without a fight! Hutchinson County was the site of the decisive battle that brought about the Red River war – which ended the Indians' domination of the Plains.

The Hutchinson County Historical Museum features exhibits of the battles at Adobe Walls and other events of this transformative period in American history.

HCHM also displays the artifacts and tells the stories of early ranching and farming in the area as well as the story of the Borger Oil Boom in 1926 that altered the course of the Texas Panhandle economy.

For more information visit
hutchinsoncountymuseum.org

The Museum is open
Tuesday-Friday 9 am to 5 pm
Saturday 1 pm to 4:30 pm
Free Admission, Kid-friendly

HCHM
Hutchinson County Historical Museum

618 North Main Street
Borger, Texas 79007
806 • 273 • 0130

Comanche Chief Quanah Parker
The last survivor of the Battle of 1874, Chief Yellow Fish, his wife and Mrs. Billy Dixon at the Indian monument ceremony in 1941
Quanah near the time of his death in 1911

This ad is sponsored by the Friends of the Hutchinson County Historical Museum

RAILROAD MUSEUMS

In May we watched as people lined highways and dirt roads from Cheyenne to Ogden to see the Big Boy steam engines *No. 4014* and *844* chug their way to the 150th celebration of the transcontinental railroad at Promontory Summit. Big events all along the route celebrated a defining moment in Western history, one that forever changed the nature of the landscape.

Nevada Northern Railroad and Museum /Ely, Nevada

– COURTESY TRAVELNEVADA –

NEVADA NORTHERN RAILWAY MUSEUM
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Ely, NV • ***GreatBasinHeritage.org***

SOUTHERN ARIZONA TRANSPORTATION MUSEUM
Tucson, AZ • ***TucsonHistoricDepot.com***

CALIFORNIA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
Sacramento, CA • ***CaliforniaRailroad.museum***

TEHACHAPI DEPOT RAILROAD MUSEUM
Tehachapi, CA • ***TehachapiDepot.org***

DAYTON HISTORIC DEPOT
Dayton, WA • ***DaytonHistoricDepot.org***

MT. RAINIER SCENIC RAILROAD AND MUSEUM
Elbe, WA • ***MRSR.com***

NEVADA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
Carson City, NV • ***NSRM-Friends.org***

GOLDEN SPIKE NHS
Brigham City, UT • ***NPS.gov***

UTAH STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
Ogden, UT • ***TheUnionStation.org***

COLORADO RAILROAD MUSEUM
Golden, CO • ***ColoradoRailroadMuseum.org***

LIVINGSTON DEPOT CENTER
Livingston, MT • ***LivingstonDepot.org***

SOUTH DAKOTA STATE RAILROAD MUSEUM
Hill City, SD • ***SRSRM.org***

RAILROAD MUSEUM
Douglas, WY • ***ConverseCountyTourism.com***

AUSTIN STEAM TRAIN ASSOCIATION
Cedar Park, TX • ***AustinSteamTrain.org***

CHEYENNE DEPOT MUSEUM
Cheyenne, WY • ***CheyenneDepotMuseum.org***

JAMES H. ANDREW RAILROAD MUSEUM & HISTORY CENTER
Boone, IA • ***Scenic-ValleyRR.com***

UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD MUSEUM
Council Bluffs, IA • ***UPRRMuseum.org***

GOLDEN SPIKE TOWER & VISITORS CENTER
North Platte, NE • ***GoldenSpikeTower.com***

GALVESTON RR MUSEUM
Galveston, TX • ***GalvestonMuseum.org***

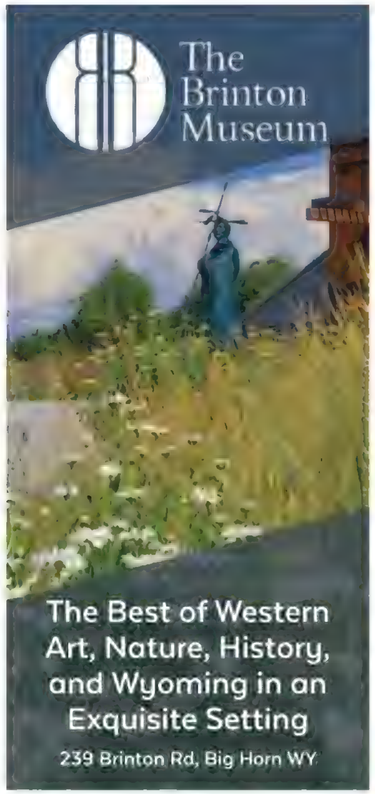
MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN RAILROAD
Frisco, TX • ***MuseumOfTheAmericanRailroad.com***

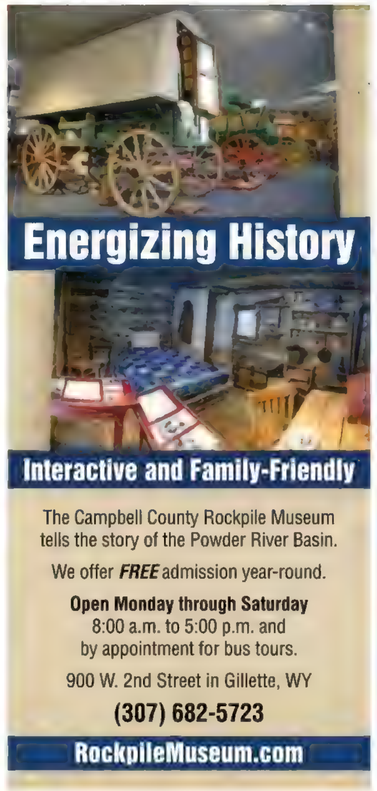
The **Nelson Museum of the West**'s Western ranching (left), military history and Plains Indian collections are among the most complete for a small-to-midsize history museum in the Western United States.

– COURTESY WYOMING OFFICE OF TOURISM –

A walking tour of the **Fort Smith National Historic Site** (right) in Fort Smith, Arkansas, informs and enlightens visitors with detailed indoor and outdoor exhibitions on 200 years of Arkansas history and the fort's role in regional, national and cultural history.

– COURTESY ARKANSAS OFFICE OF TOURISM –

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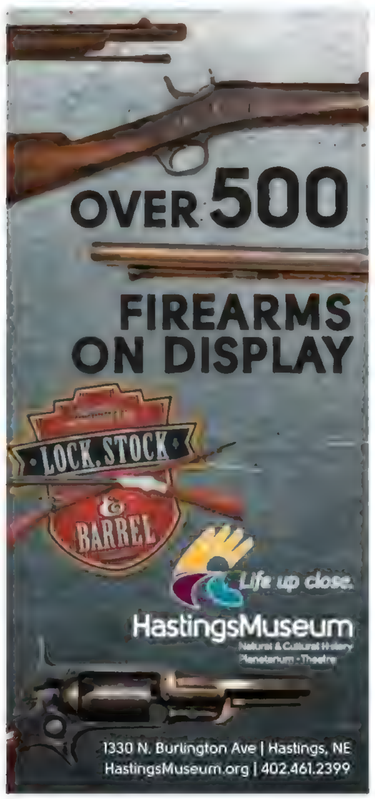

The original Territorial Governor's Mansion (above) is the centerpiece of **Sharlot Hall Museum** in Prescott, Arizona.

– COURTESY SHARLOT HALL –

11 THE DURHAM MUSEUM, OMAHA, NE
Located in Omaha's Union Station, this museum highlighted the 150th anniversary of the linking of the Union Pacific and Central Pacific railroads with the exhibit "After Promontory: 150 Years of Transcontinental Railroading." ***DurhamMuseum.org***

12 CHISHOLM TRAIL HERITAGE CENTER DUNCAN, OK: "Ancient. Massive. Wild," an exhibit about bison from prehistory to the present, was a main attraction at the heritage center this year. "A Texas State of Mind" featuring the art of Larry G. Lemons opened in July for a three-month run. ***OnTheChisholmTrail.com***

13 PONY EXPRESS MUSEUM ST. JOSEPH, MO: The story of the Pony Express is the focus here, where visitors can see a blacksmith shop, learn how to load a wagon and understand the role of the Pony Express in linking the country before completion of the transcontinental telegraph. ***PonyExpress.org***

14 PUEBLO GRANDE MUSEUM & ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK PHOENIX, AZ: The "Centuries of Change" exhibits reflect the complex culture of the Hohokam people and how they used desert plants and animals for a variety of needs from food to clothing. A trail to the ruin site provides views of a Hohokam platform and ball court. The "Doorways to the Past: Hohokam Houses" exhibit features an adobe compound and pit house cluster. ***PuebloGrande.org***

15 BUFFALO SOLDIERS NATIONAL MUSEUM, HOUSTON, TX: Organized to recognize the history and traditions of the Buffalo Soldiers, this museum has a broad mission to preserve

Sanctioned by the State of Texas, the City of Waco's **Texas Rangers Museum and Hall of Fame**, houses the largest collection and archive dedicated to the storied law-enforcement agency in the Lone Star State.

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TOP FRONTIER FORT MUSEUMS

The military has played a major role in the shaping of the American West since the arrival of the Spanish and the establishment of presidios in the borderlands. That heritage continues to be preserved and presented at scores of sites operated by federal, state and city agencies and a number of private individuals and nonprofit organizations. They range from ante bellum centers, including the storied Alamo, to sites highlighting the Civil War and post-Civil War frontier army so often depicted by Hollywood. These ten standouts go far beyond the silver screen to present the gamut of military history from the fight for Texas independence to the last of the Indian wars and beyond. A few are found in major metropolitan areas, and many in remote places, much like they were in their heydays. Regardless of the locale, all are worthy of a special visit for Western enthusiasts.

1 THE ALAMO, San Antonio, TX • ***TheAlamo.org***

2 FORT SILL NATIONAL LANDMARK AND MUSEUM, Fort Sill, OK • ***Sill-Army.mil***

3 FORT ROBINSON STATE PARK
Crawford, NE • ***OutdoorNebraska.gov***

4 FORT CONCHO NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK, San Angelo, TX • ***FortConcho.com***

5 FORT LARNED NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE,
Larned, KS • ***NPS.gov***

6 FORT DOUGLAS MILITARY MUSEUM
Salt Lake City, UT • ***FortDouglas.org***

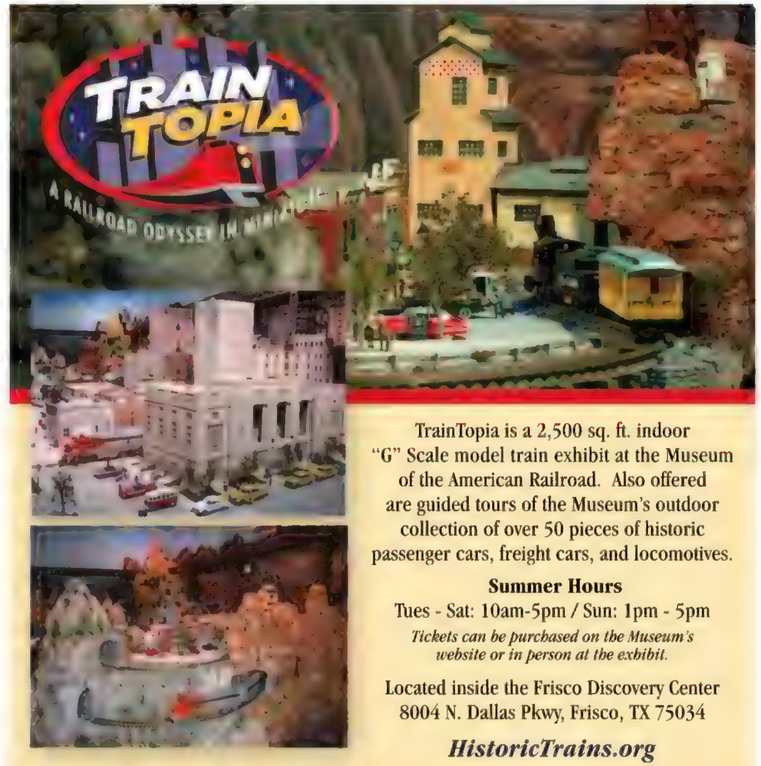
7 FORT LARAMIE NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE,
Fort Laramie, WY • ***NPS.gov***

8 FORT DAVIS NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE,
Fort Davis, TX • ***NPS.gov***

9 ROCKY MOUNTAIN MUSEUM OF MILITARY HISTORY
Missoula, MT • ***FortMissoula.org***

10 JEFFERSON BARRACKS MUSEUMS,
Lemay, MO • ***StLouisCo.com***

—**John Langellier**, Ph.D., *True West*'s Collecting the West editor



TrainTopia is a 2,500 sq. ft. indoor "G" Scale model train exhibit at the Museum of the American Railroad. Also offered are guided tours of the Museum's outdoor collection of over 50 pieces of historic passenger cars, freight cars, and locomotives.

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Tickets can be purchased on the Museum's website or in person at the exhibit.

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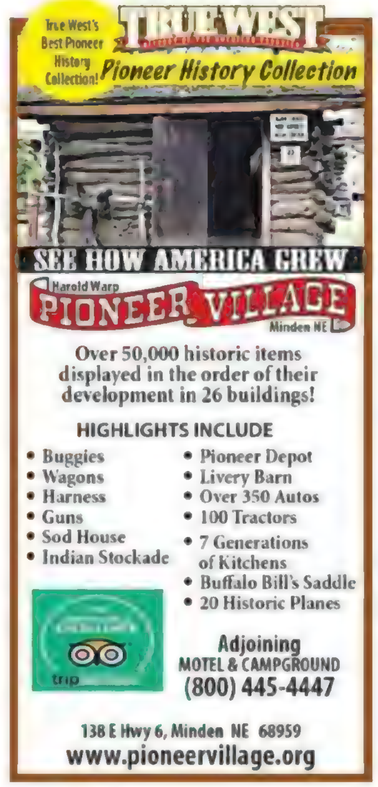
HistoricTrains.org



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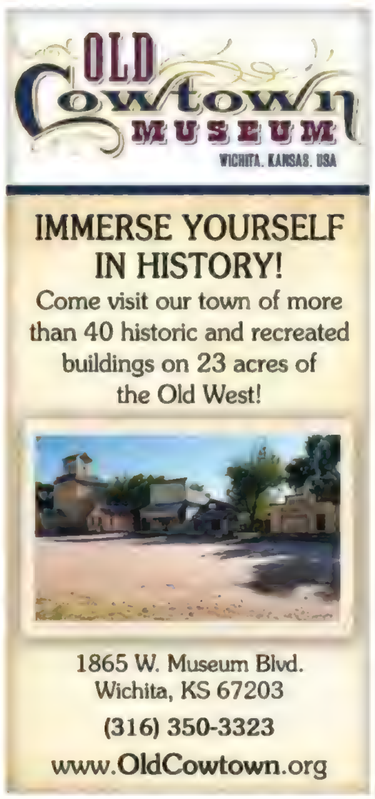

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The **John Wayne Birthplace and Museum** in Winterset, Iowa, the country's largest museum dedicated to the American icon, preserves his first home (above) and interprets his life and career.

– COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS –

the legacy of African American soldiers. Re-enactors and theater actors provide special programs including "Day in the Life of a Buffalo Soldier" and "The Resurrection of Harriet Tubman in Escape to Freedom." ***BuffaloSoldierMuseum.com***

16 MUSEUM OF THE MOUNTAIN MAN
PINEDALE, WY: Seven mountain man rendezvous took place in the Upper Green River area, and this museum celebrates that legacy. You can even see a gun that once belonged to Jim Bridger. ***MuseumOfTheMountainman.com***

17 NEVADA STATE MUSEUM
CARSON CITY, NV
This museum features an exhibit of equipment from the Carson City Mint and demonstrations of pressing coins on the No. 1 coin press. In 2020 the museum will celebrate the 150th anniversary of that mint. ***NVCulture.org***

18 KETCHIKAN HISTORICAL MUSEUM
KETCHIKAN, AK: Exhibits reflect significant aspects of this island community, including native Alaskan heritage, timber harvesting, salmon fishing and more. Short videos incorporate archival footage and the stories of the people who have called Ketchikan home. ***KTN-AK.us***

Candy Moulton recommends a visit to the Wyoming State Capitol, which was reopened on July 10, following an extensive renovation that uncovered unique architecture and hidden art.

The Museum of the Mountain Man (right) in Pinedale, Wyoming, is a living history center dedicated to the heritage and history of the 19th-century fur trapper and fur trade.

– COURTESY MUSEUM OF THE MOUNTAIN MAN –

Editor's Pick
16 MUSEUMS NOT TO MISS

CAMPBELL COUNTY ROCKPILE MUSEUM
Gillette, WY • ***RockpileMuseum.com***

SMOKI MUSEUM
Prescott, AZ • ***SmokiMuseum.org***

CAVE CREEK MUSEUM
Cave Creek, AZ • ***CaveCreekMuseum.org***

NORTHEASTERN NEVADA MUSEUM
Elko, NV • ***MuseumElko.org***

TUBAC PRESIDIO STATE HISTORIC PARK
Tubac, AZ • ***TubacPP.com***

TOMBSTONE COURTHOUSE MUSEUM STATE PARK
Tombstone, AZ • ***TombstoneCourthouse.org***

RIM COUNTRY MUSEUM & ZANE GREY CABIN
Payson, AZ • ***RimCountryMuseum.org***

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAIN MUSEUM
Apache Junction, AZ
SuperstitionMountainMuseum.org

FLINT HILLS DISCOVERY CENTER
Manhattan, KS • ***FlintHillsDiscovery.org***

ANCIENT OZARKS NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM
Ridgedale, MO • ***BigCedar.com***

AMERIND FOUNDATION
Dragoon, AZ • ***Amerind.org***

HUTCHINSON COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM
Borger, TX • ***HutchinsonCountyMuseum.org***

CRIPPLE CREEK DISTRICT MUSEUM
Cripple Creek, CO • ***Cripplecreekmuseum.com***

HASTINGS MUSEUM
Hastings, NE • ***HastingsMuseum.org***

BIRDCAGE THEATRE MUSEUM
Tombstone, AZ • ***TombstoneBirdcage.com***

BONUS: WORKING COWBOY RANCH ASSOCIATION, *Amarillo, TX:* This is not a museum, but it is the real deal. The men and women who make their living on ranches across the West take part in ranch rodeos that showcase their every-day skills. ***WRCA.org***

NEW MUSEUMS

New or soon-to-open museums honor Western heritage in Arizona, top cowboys in Oklahoma and the United States Marshals Service, which celebrates its 230th anniversary this year.

U.S. MARSHALS MUSEUM
Fort Smith, AR • ***USMuseum.org***

WESTERN HERITAGE CENTER
Prescott, AZ • ***VisitWHC.org***

THE BEN JOHNSON COWBOY MUSEUM
Pawhuska, OK • ***Facebook.com***

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Yana & Marty Davis Map Collection

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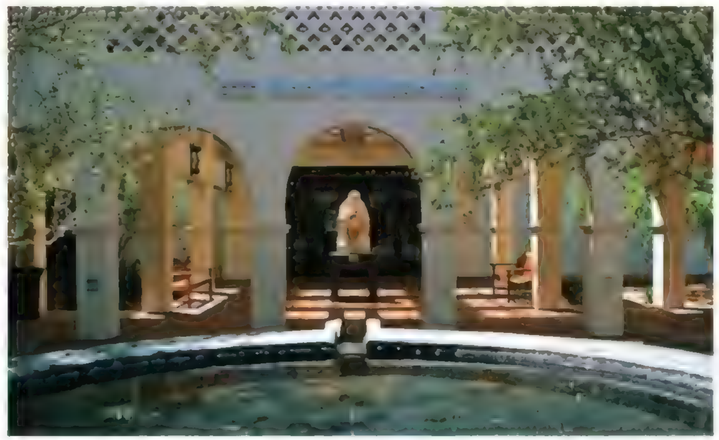
TRUE WEST
TOP ART MUSEUMS OF THE WEST 2019

BY JOHNNY D. BOGGS

Western Art Museums of the Year

In large and small institutions, curators create magic through creativity and imagination in the West's best gallery exhibitions.



In 2019, the **Heard Museum** in Phoenix, Arizona, celebrated its 90th anniversary. The Heard is internationally acclaimed for its leadership in partnering with North American Native peoples in the preservation and promotion of tribal arts and craftsmanship.

– COURTESY ARIZONA OFFICE OF TOURISM –

The American West—and Western art—have always been about change. The same can be said about Western art museums. The 2018-2019 season was full of changes.

For example, the Western and Indian art galleries at the Denver Art Museum remain closed during renovations, but the recently acquired Hermon Atkins MacNeil bronze "The Sun Vow" is part of "Treasures of British Art: The Berger Collection" that runs through January 5. And Mary Burke, a fixture at the Sid Richardson Museum in Fort Worth, Texas, announced her retirement and is being replaced by Scott Winterrowd, former education director at Dallas's Meadows Museum.

The biggest changes, of course, remain ever-evolving exhibitions—proving that Western art remains vibrant and constantly on the move.

1 **HEARD MUSEUM, PHOENIX, AZ**
Ninety years after its founding by Dwight and Maie Bartlett Heard, the Heard continues to champion American Indian arts and American Indians of yesterday, today and tomorrow. "Grand Procession: Contemporary Plains Indian Dolls from the Charles and Valerie Diker Collection" runs through April 17, and "Through the Lens of Barry Goldwater," from the famed Arizona senator's slide collection, opens September 20. ***Heard.org***

2 **THE BRINTON MUSEUM BIG HORN, WY:** Housed at a historic ranch (the 1892 house is worth the admission) near Sheridan, The Brinton continues to seamlessly blend history, art and nature.

Just outside Sheridan, Wyoming, in the town of Big Horn, **The Brinton Museum** is home to an extensive collection of Plains Indian cultural material and art.

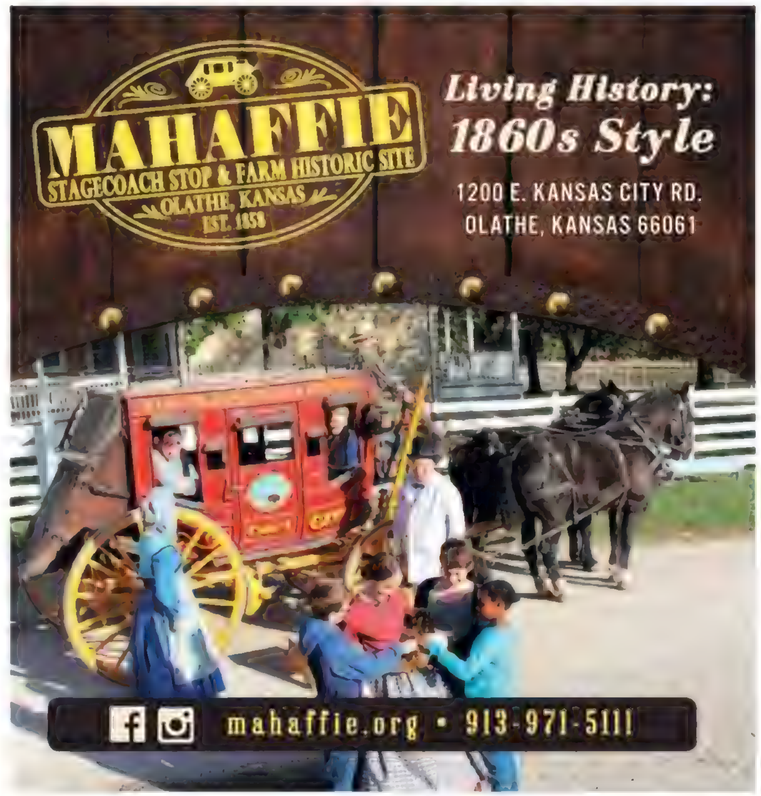
– COURTESY WYOMING OFFICE OF TOURISM –

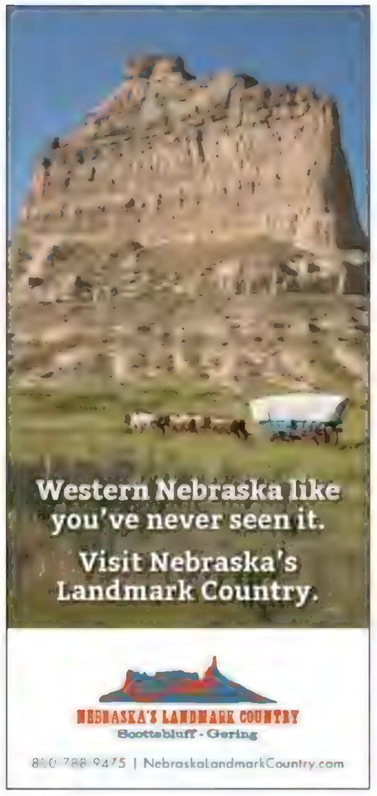
Hurry: "The Spiritual Nature of Earth, Hide and Metal," an invitational exhibit of clay, leather and metal art, closes September 2. ***TheBrintonMuseum.org***

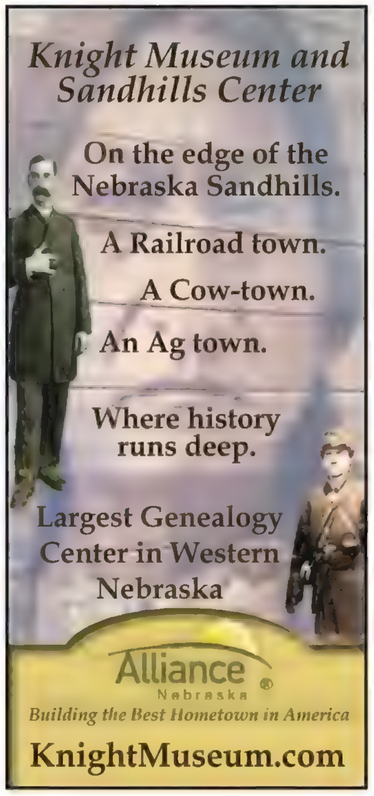
3 **DESERT CABALLEROS WESTERN MUSEUM, WICKENBURG, AZ**
Founded in 1960, this Southwestern institution overcame a 1972 fire to become one of the liveliest art museums around, but don't forget its history and oral history collections or the fun annual events, Cowgirl Up! and heART of the West. ***WesternMuseum.org***

4 **FREDERIC REMINGTON ART MUSEUM, OGDENSBURG, NY**
Established in 1923 as the Remington Art Memorial, the home of Remington's widow is the go-to spot to learn about the artist and his art. But this isn't just about Remington or just the West. Check out the 2019 "Members Juried Art Exhibit," which runs through September 15. ***FredericRemington.org***

5 **OLAF WIEGHORST MUSEUM, EL CAJON, CA:** The Denmark-born Wieghorst (1899–1988) settled here in 1945 and made a name for himself as a great Western painter. If you like Frederic Remington and Charles M. Russell, this accomplished artist is worth discovering. ***WieghorstMuseum.org***







One of the primary ways Wickenburg, Arizona's, **Desert Caballeros Western Museum** celebrates the history of the Grand Canyon State is through Western art, such as Cowboy Artists of America co-founder Charlie Dye's *Cullin' the Herd.*

– COURTESY DESERT CABALLEROS WESTERN MUSEUM –

6 A.R. MITCHELL MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART, TRINIDAD, CO: Trinidad still feels like an Old West town, so there's no better place to learn about hometown hero Arthur Roy Mitchell (1889-1977), one of the golden era of pulp magazines' top illustrators, who left New York in the 1940s to come home and paint and teach art. ***ARMitchellMuseum.com***

7 JOSLYN ART MUSEUM, OMAHA, NE Founded in 1931, the Joslyn showcases a wide array of art. "The Race to Promontory: The Transcontinental Railroad and the American West," which closed in January, provided a great history lesson, and the Joslyn's collection of early Western artists is phenomenal. ***Joslyn.org***

8 NATIONAL COWBOY AND WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM OKLAHOMA CITY, OK: The William S. and Ann Atherton Art of the American West gallery wows newcomers and returnees on a daily basis. "Layered Stories—America's Canyonlands" runs through October 20, and "Caballeros y Vaqueros" opens September 14, so look out. ***NationalCowboyMuseum.org***

9 CM RUSSELL MUSEUM GREAT FALLS, MT: Charlie Russell's home, studio and art are featured in great exhibits. Plus, a James Ersfeld Memorial symposium from Western Writers of America, "Writing the West: From *The Ox-bow Incident* to *Killers of the Flower Moon*," is scheduled September 27-28. That's hard to top. ***CMRussell.org***

10 EITELJORG MUSEUM OF AMERICAN INDIANS AND WESTERN ART INDIANAPOLIS, IN: Always known for its Indian art, the Eiteljorg has reinvented its Western art galleries into a diverse, informative and enthralling experience. ***Eiteljorg.org***

11 TACOMA ART MUSEUM TACOMA, WA: Exhibitions "Immigrant Artists and the American West, Native Portraiture: Power and Perception, Places to Call Home: Settlements in the West" and "Winter in the West" continue into 2020. How much better can this mecca get? ***TacomaArtMuseum.org***

Located in Eva Remington's home in Ogdensburg, New York, the **Frederic Remington Art Museum** (above) is home to many of the rarest and finest examples of the Western artist's sculptures and paintings.

– COURTESY FREDERIC REMINGTON ART MUSEUM –

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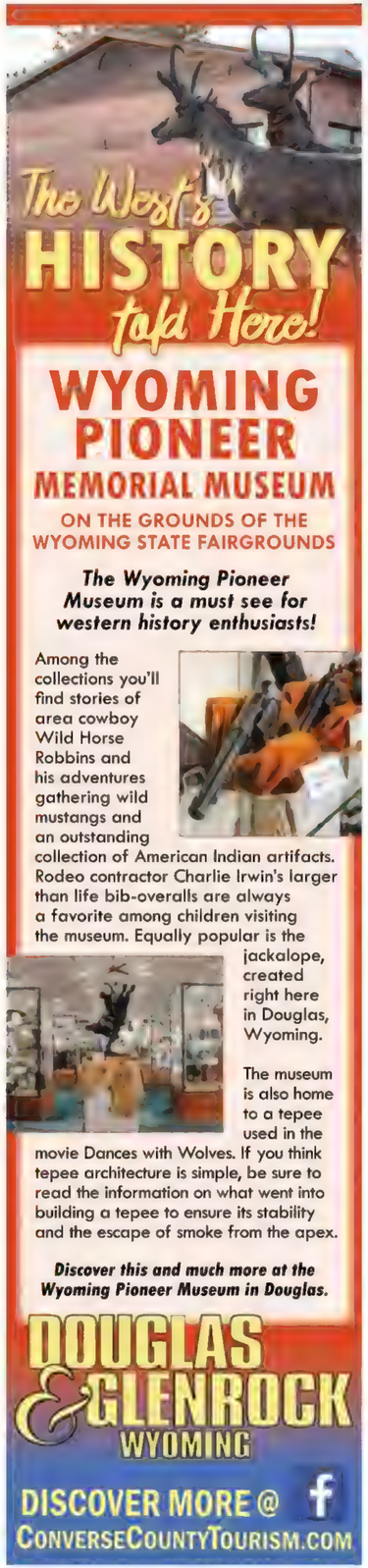
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WYOMING STATE FAIRGROUNDS
The Wyoming Pioneer
Museum is a must see for
western history enthusiasts!
Among the collections you'll find stories of area cowboy Wild Horse Robbins and his adventures gathering wild mustangs and an outstanding collection of American Indian artifacts. Rodeo contractor Charlie Irwin's larger than life bib-overalls are always a favorite among children visiting the museum. Equally popular is the jackalope, created right here in Douglas, Wyoming.
The museum is also home to a tepee used in the movie Dances with Wolves. If you think tepee architecture is simple, be sure to read the information on what went into building a tepee to ensure its stability and the escape of smoke from the apex.
Discover this and much more at the
Wyoming Pioneer Museum in Douglas.
DOUGLAS
& GLENROCK
WYOMING
DISCOVER MORE @
ConverseCountyTourism.com

The **A.R. Mitchell Museum** in Trinidad, Colorado, celebrates the life of the Western artist, including his popular pulp-magazine and book cover art, such as *No Time for Coffee*.

– COURTESY AR MITCHELL MUSEUM –

12 **BOOTH WESTERN ART MUSEUM**
CARTERSVILLE, GA: Western art appreciation grows in the South thanks to the Booth. "*Lonesome Dove*: Bill Wittliff Photographs" opens September 19 and runs through February 9, a fitting tribute as Wittliff, who adapted Larry McMurtry's novel into the hit miniseries, died after an apparent heart attack June 9 at age 79. ***BoothMuseum.org***

13 **NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN**
WASHINGTON, DC: A component of the Smithsonian Institution, the collection stretches from the Arctic Circle to Tierra del Fuego. Another branch is in New York City. ***NMAI.SI.edu***

14 **GILCREASE MUSEUM, TULSA, OK**
"Americans All! and Enduring Spirit: Native American Art" remain perennial highlights for visitors. Plus, "Bob Dylan: Face Value and Beyond" runs through September 15. ***Gilcrease.org***

The **National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum** in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, is one of the nation's premier museums dedicated to the culture, history and art of the American West.

– COURTESY NATIONAL COWBOY & WESTERN HERITAGE MUSEUM –

15 **THE BRYAN MUSEUM**
GALVESTON, TX
The Bryan celebrates Texas and Western history through art and more. Its first Hands on Texas History Festival debuted June 29. ***TheBryanMuseum.org***

16 **WICHITA ART MUSEUM**
WICHITA, KS: "Georgia O'Keeffe: Art, Image, Style closed in June, but "Heritage of the West: Charles M. Russell" is always showing, always popular. ***WichitaArtMuseum.org***

17 **TUCSON MUSEUM OF ART**
TUCSON, AZ: Western art is the key element here. "The Western Sublime: Majestic Landscapes of the American West" opens October 19 and runs through February 9. ***TucsonMuseumOfArt.org***

Johnny D. Boggs's next novel, *Buckskin, Bloomers & Me*, is due out in December from Center Point Large Print.

REGIONAL WESTERN ART MUSEUMS

Stark Museum of Art/Orange, Texas

– COURTESY STARK MUSEUM OF ART –

PHIPPEN ART MUSEUM, PRESCOTT, AZ
Great permanent and temporary exhibits, and a great annual art show and sale.
PhippenArtMuseum.org

CLYMER MUSEUM AND GALLERY
ELLENSBURG, WA: It's dedicated to the art of John Clymer (1907–1989)—and others.
ClymerMuseum.org

THE ROCKWELL MUSEUM, CORNING, NY
The diverse collection ranges from American Indian art to masterworks.
RockwellMuseum.org

THE MUSEUM OF WESTERN ART, KERRVILLE, TX
"The Children's Gallery: Journey West" appeals to adults and children.
MuseumOfWesternArt.com

EL PASO MUSEUM OF ART, EL PASO, TX
Tom Lea and World War II (through January 5) shows another side of the Western artist/writer. ***EPMA.art***

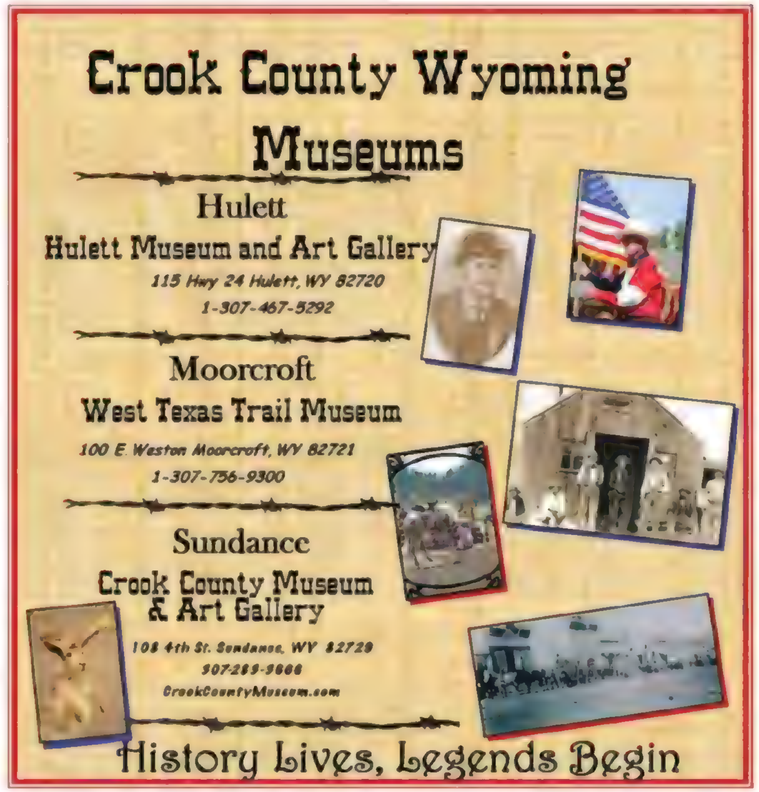
CHRYSLER MUSEUM OF ART, NORFOLK, VA
Obscure American Indian art, plus Civil War photographs are displayed. ***Chrysler.org***

CRYSTAL BRIDGES MUSEUM OF AMERICAN ART
BENTONVILLE, AR: Karl Bodmer, George Catlin, Georgia O'Keeffe and more are featured.
CrystalBridges.org

THE JAMES MUSEUM OF WESTERN & WILDLIFE ART, SAINT PETERSBURG, FL: This newbie, which opened in 2018, shows the early West and today's West. ***TheJamesMuseum.org***

PEARCE MUSEUM AT NAVARRO COLLEGE
CORSICANA, TX: On display are 200-plus works of Western art, and a huge Civil War gallery.
PearceMuseum.com

STARK MUSEUM OF ART, ORANGE, TX
Two centuries of Western paintings, sculptures, prints and photographs are exhibited. ***StarkCulturalVenues.org***



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WESTERN ROUNDUP

FOR SEPTEMBER 2019

– COURTESY SOUTH DAKOTA OFFICE OF TOURISM –

THE 29TH ANNUAL DEADWOOD JAM

Deadwood, SD, September 12-15: The event begins with the annual Art and Jam Auction fundraiser at Jacob's Art Gallery on Main Street.
607-578-1876 • *Deadwood.com*

between the twin cities of Grand Forks and East Grand Forks, MN.
701-775-1150
GreenwayTakeover.com

RE-ENACTMENTS

DEFEAT OF JESSE JAMES DAYS

Northfield, MN, September 4-8: Celebrate the town heroes who stopped the Jesse James Gang during their famous 1876 bank raid.
800-658-2548 • *DJJD.org*

ART SHOWS

11TH ANNUAL GRAND CANYON CELEBRATION OF ART

Grand Canyon, AZ, September 7, 2019-January 20, 2020: An event for visitors and artists, Celebration of Art supports the arts at the South Rim.
928-638-2481 • *GrandCanyon.org*

HERITAGE FESTIVALS

ELKO COUNTY FAIR

Elko, NV, August 23-September 2: The Elko County Fair has been mixing families and fun for 99 years with entertainment and events for everyone in the family.
800-248-ELKO • *ElkoCountyFair.com*

SHOWDOWN IN TOMBSTONE

Tombstone, AZ, August 31-September 1: The 7th annual Labor Day weekend event offers fun for the whole family with two days of continuous entertainment, re-enactors, a costume competition, a raffle and much more.
888-457-3929 • *TombstoneChamber.com*

HARVESTFEST

Hazen, ND, September 4-8: The fest includes music in the park, wiener dog races, a parade, quilt show, classic cars, a corn-hole tournament and street dance.
701-748-6848 • *VisitHazenND.com*

31ST ANNUAL FIESTA DE SEPTIEMBRE

Wickenburg, AZ, September 7: Celebrate Wickenburg's Hispanic Pioneer Heritage with Mariachi music, folklorico dancers and an outdoor mercado.
928-684-5479 • *WickenburgChamber.com*

HAPPY CANYON INDIAN PAGEANT & WILD WEST SHOW

Pendleton, OR, September 11-14: The outdoor Pageant of the West show honors American Indian heritage and the settling of the West.
800-457-6336 • *HappyCanyon.com*

OGALLALA INDIAN SUMMER RENDEZVOUS

Ogallala, NE, September 19-21: The colorful heritage of the South Platte River valley is celebrated with live entertainment, dances, food and crafts.
800-658-4390
OgallalaIndianSummerRendezvous.com

BANDERA ROUND-UP

Bandera, TX, August 30- September 1: Bandera comes alive with a longhorn cattle drive, all-women ranch rodeo, mutton busting and a ranch rodeo.
830-796-3280 • *ExperienceBandera.com*

NATIONAL COWBOY SYMPOSIUM & CELEBRATION

Lubbock, TX, September 6-8: Celebrate cowboy culture at one of the West's biggest chuckwagon cook-offs, plus enjoy cowboy music and poetry.
806-798-7825 • *Cowboy.org*

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Gering, NE, September 21-22: Nebraska's agricultural history is honored with parades and demonstrations at Legacy of the Plains Museum.
308-436-1989 • *LegacyOfThePlains.org*

MUSIC

GREENWAY TAKEOVER FESTIVAL

Grand Forks, ND, September 5-8: Celebrate community and music at the 2,200-acre park

RODEOS

TRI-COUNTY FAIR & STAMPEDE

Winnemucca, NV, August 29-September 1: The 98th Annual Rodeo includes the Bulls and Broncs Rodeo, Western art roundup and Buckaroo Hall of Fame events.
800-962-2638 • *Winnemucca.com*

STOCKYARDS CHAMPIONSHIP RODEO

Fort Worth, TX, September 6-28: Cheer on rodeo cowboys at the world's first indoor rodeo, which debuted at the Cowtown Coliseum in 1908.
817-625-1025 • *StockyardsRodeo.com*

PENDLETON ROUND-UP

Pendleton, OR, September 7-14: The PRCA rodeo offers cowboy concerts, Indian relay races, the Happy Canyon Festival and a rodeo parade.
800-457-6336 • *PendletonRoundUp.com*

STOCK SHOWS

MEEKER CLASSIC SHEEPDOG CHAMPIONSHIP TRIALS

Meeker, CO, September 4-8: The five days of sheepdog-herding competition offers a purse and added money totaling $27,000.
970-878-0111 • *MeekerSheepdog.com*

HELLS CANYON MULE DAYS

Enterprise, OR, September 6-8: This mule show and sale features an Old World Oxen Living History Camp, plus cowboy music, poetry and art.
325-677-4376 • *HellsCanyonMuleDays.com*

TWMag.com:
View Western events on our website.

Reading & Riding

Marshall Trimble is Arizona's official historian and vice president of the Wild West History Association. His latest book is *Arizona Oddities: Land of Anomalies and Tamales;* History Press, 2018. If you have a question, write: Ask the Marshall, P.O. Box 8008, Cave Creek, AZ 85327 or e-mail him at marshall.trimble@scottsdalecc.edu

What did cowboys read for pleasure?

Chris Robinson
London, Kentucky

Cowboys were likely to pack a dime novel featuring Jesse James, Bess the Trapper or Wild Bill Hickok in their saddle bags—action stories. A surprising number of mountain men loved to read Shakespeare and recite the stories around the campfires. Some of them liked to spice up the stories with colorful profanity.

In the mid-19th century, cowboys who could read enjoyed dime novels in their idle hours.

– TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

Here is a list of other popular books during the 19th century: **Mark Twain:** *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*, **James Fenimore Cooper:** *Last of the Mohicans* and *Deerslayer*, **Louisa May Alcott:** *Little Women*, **Stephen Crane:** *The Red Badge of Courage*, **Jane Austen:** *Pride and Prejudice*, **Herman Melville:** *Moby-Dick*, **Charles Dickens:** *David Copperfield*, **Harriet Beecher Stowe:** *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. **The Holy Bible**

Horses rarely get shot in the Westerns, although they often go down when the rider is hit. What about in real life?

Robert Lucas
Carson City, Nevada

Horses suffered heavy casualties in warfare of any kind. They presented large targets and bullets were flying in all directions. Also, shooters would fire at horses to get the rider on the ground and more vulnerable. With the advent of machine guns and barbed wire in the 20th century, armored vehicles soon replaced the horse cavalry.

What happened to Mike Cassidy, Butch Cassidy's mentor?

Michael Glidden
Morrisville, North Carolina

I checked with Wild Bunch authors Donna Ernst (*Women of the Wild Bunch*) and Mark T. Smokov (*He Rode with Butch and Sundance: The Story of Harvey "Kid Curry" Logan*). They believe that Mike eventually quit the rustling business and headed to Fort Worth, Texas, where he ran a saloon on Calhoun Street in the city's red-light district known as "Hell's Half Acre."

Members of the Wild Bunch knew that area well, as documented by the "Fort Worth Five" photo taken in December 1900. Locals weren't that interested in bank and train robberies that took place hundreds of miles to the north. Fort Worth was a cattle town and outlaws could mix and mingle with cowboys and cattlemen. And there was an abundance of bordellos, saloons and gambling parlors.

Unlike his brother Mike Cassidy, Butch Cassidy (above) did not quit the outlaw business in Fort Worth, Texas, but instead went to South America with the Sundance Kid and Ethel "Etta" Place.

– COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS –

Hugh O'Brian did not sport a mustache in the title role in *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp* because television "good guys" were clean-shaven in the 1950s.

– COURTESY ABC TELEVISION –

Why didn't Hugh O'Brian wear a mustache in *The Life and Legend of Wyatt Earp?*

Dean "Dino" Giangregorio
Virginia Beach, Virginia

It's hard to say for sure. But this was the 1950s and most of the "good guys" in those Westerns were clean-shaven. There were some exceptions—Gregory Peck wore a mustache in the Twentieth Century-Fox film *The Gunfighter*, as did John Russell in the ABC television show *Lawman*. But, for the most part, the shows followed the style of their times, not the actual Wild West.

Did pioneers use snowshoes in the winter?

Kathy Church
Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Yes, they used snowshoes, especially in the high Sierra and Rocky Mountain regions where winters were brutal. They also had skis, although they were longer than those in use today and they were cross country, not for downhill. But when conditions were especially bad, they did the obvious thing—they just stayed indoors.

What illness did Jim Bowie have that confined him to a cot just before the final Mexican attack on the Alamo?

Duff Hale
Midlothian, Texas

It's likely he had advanced tuberculosis, also known as consumption or lung disease. It was quite common and contagious. Some believe Bowie had typhoid pneumonia. He also was a heavy drinker. I think a combination of the three wrecked his health.

In the June issue of *True West*, there are several photos of the mines and miners of George Hearst (pp. 20-25). How did those men get paid?

Jimmy Spell
Sonora, California

Hard rock miners worked for wages. It varied but here's a good example:

A 12-hour workday (seven days) paid $2.25, and $1.00 went for room and board. The men working the stamp mill were paid $4 a day. The Comstock Lode in Nevada had the reputation of providing the best working conditions for miners. They were paid a guaranteed $4 minimum for an underground, eight-hour shift, making Comstock miners some of the best paid industrial workers in the world.

By the early 1900s, many hard rock miners saw work weeks cut to six and then five days. A workday dropped to 10 hours and eventually to eight hours. However, in places like Clifton, Arizona, Mexican miners were making half that wage and working longer hours. ★

Depending on mine ownership, the pay, hours and working conditions for hard rock miners varied across the West.

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What HISTORY HAS TAUGHT ME

When I was nine I almost drowned. It's like watching television. There was no pain and it was a very serene experience. Thank God my next-door neighbor, Anna Capana, was there to rescue me. She saved my life.

My favorite memory from Cloonan Junior High School is that I was voted the most athletic boy and the shyest boy in school.

My first love was baseball and I fulfilled the dream I had since I was nine years old, and went to Major League spring training with the American League Washington Senators.

My idol growing up was Joe DiMaggio. When I first saw Joe, as a nine-year-old kid at Yankee Stadium, I knew I wanted to be a Major League Baseball player, just like him. And to think one day he would become my friend... Amazing!

If it wasn't for Mary Jane, my life would not be complete. We are a team. We love each other and are blessed to be together.

For my money, the best Western ever made is John Ford's *Stagecoach*, starring John Wayne and a great cast of supporting actors.

I was one of the last Hollywood studio contract players.I was under contract to MGM, Warner Brothers and Twentieth Century-Fox.

Working with Budd Boetticher taught me why he was a great director. He gave me my first starring role in *Westbound*. I played a one-armed soldier boy, returning home from the Civil War.

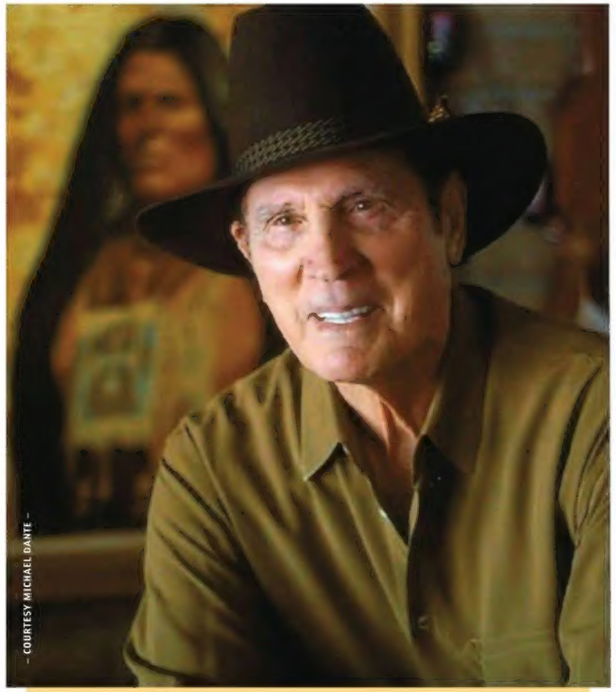
I co-starred or appeared in *Cheyenne, Maverick, Lawman, Sugarfoot, Colt .45* and many other Western television shows when I was under contract to Warner Brothers.

I did *Bonanza* because it was my favorite Western television show. It was a great company and cast to work with; we were like family.

Over my long career I have played American Indians in *Winterhawk, Apache Rifles, Custer* [in the role of Crazy Horse] (ABC, 1967) and *Daniel Boone* (NBC, 1964-1970). I have tried to give these roles the dignity and nobility they deserve.

Of all the Westerns I made my favorite is *Winterhawk* (1975). "I loved this role and I made him a spiritual man. The character was not written that way and I wanted to give another important dimension to his character."

The trick to playing Crazy Horse is to discipline myself with my speech pattern and my physical movements, to then speak like and move like Crazy Horse would.



– COURTESY MICHAEL DANTE –

MICHAEL DANTE, ACTOR AND AUTHOR

Michael Dante was born Ralph Vitti and raised in Stamford, Connecticut. He got his start when Tommy Dorsey saw him rehearsing in a play at the University of Miami, Florida, just before spring training with the Washington Senators. He arranged a screen test for Dante at MGM Studios; they signed him to a contract and he never went back to baseball. The rest is history: 30 films, 150 television shows and so much more. Honors include The Golden Boot Award and the Silver Spur Award, given by his peers in the entertainment industry; a Palm Springs Sidewalk Star; Superstition Mountain Museum Wall of Fame; and the second Honorary Arizona Ranger in the state of Arizona since 1902. The other honored Arizona Ranger was President George W. Bush. He is also the author of *Michael Dante-From Hollywood to Michael Dante Way*, winner of the Ella Dickey Literacy Award; *Winterhawk's Land*, the sequel to the movie *Winterhawk*; and *Six Rode Home*, a Civil War yarn.

Not many actors can claim a street sign named for them. A street was named after me in my hometown of Stamford, Connecticut, Michael Dante Way.

Most people don't know I love to cook. One of my favorite dishes to make is Pasta Salsiccia.

My favorite line is: "timing is not important, it's everything." It applies to so many things in life. One must work hard and be prepared to recognize that fact.

When I'm out West I love the open spaces and the mountains that remind me of the many Westerns I had the pleasure of performing in throughout my career as an actor.

History has taught me never to look back. *Sempre avanti*—Always ahead!

WALK, EAT AND STAY WHERE HISTORY HAPPENS

True West magazine has inspired travelers to take the road less traveled and explore the historic sites and towns of the American West. The 2019 True West Ultimate Historic Travel Guide has been carefully updated with recommendations on historic restaurants, saloons and hotels. Anyone who wants to discover a region from the ground up—and immerse in its local history—will enjoy relaxing and soaking up the past in a historic restaurant, saloon, hotel, lodge, inn or guest ranch..

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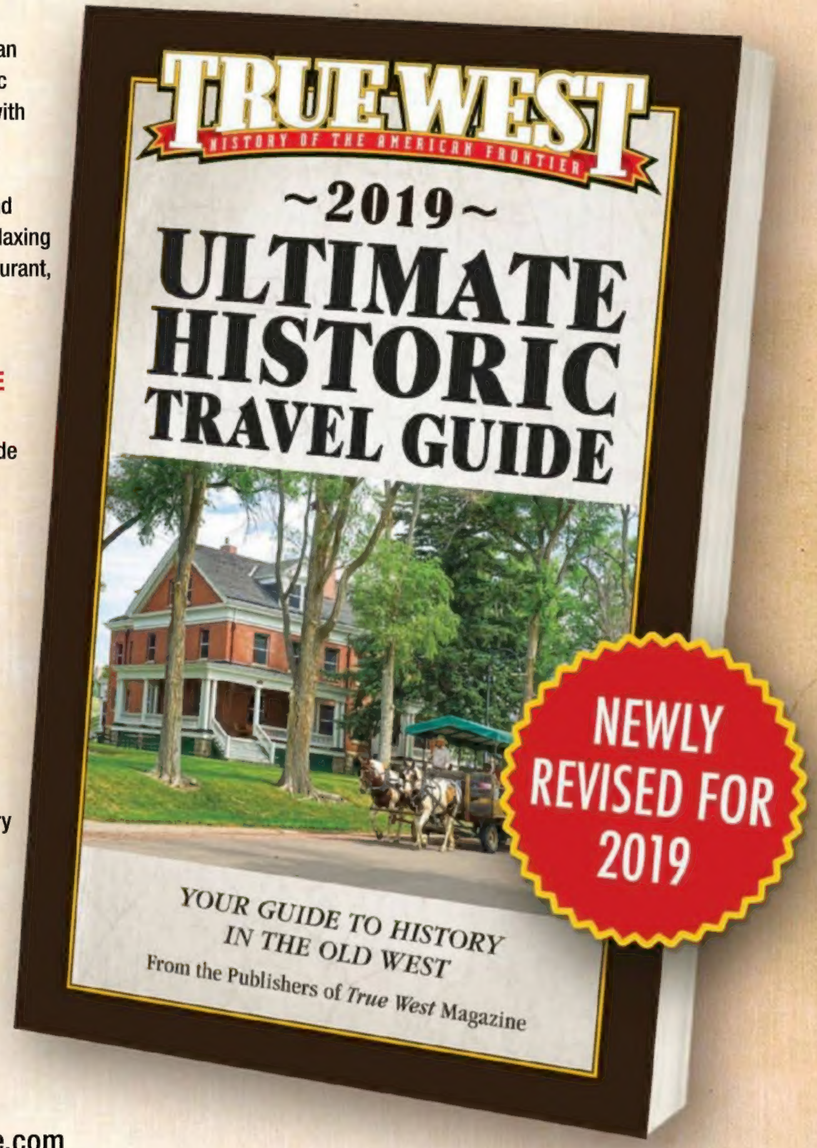
- And, much, much more …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NEWLY ADDED: Hotels, Saloons and Places to Eat in the Old West.

The strategic importance of the short ferry across the Colorado River at Fort Yuma, California, to the village of Yuma, New Mexico Territory (Arizona was not made a separate territory until 1863), cemented Yuma's future as a crossroads of Western transit, rail and commerce.

– COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS –

there for $1. Meals consisted of bacon, beans, onions, coffee and meat. The stop lasted no more than 45 minutes. Fresh drivers took the reins there. Passengers at way stations, where only the team was changed, were asked to "wash their faces" quickly and were allotted five minutes for a much-needed stretch.

Butterfield's mail traveled over land (as opposed to over sea) in fewer than 25 days. Fact is, the first run east to west was accomplished in 23 days, 23 hours. Never in the history of North America, or the world, had packages and passengers traveled so far so quickly—and without any major incidents despite bad weather, changeable terrain and Indian attacks. Everyone arrived safe and sound.

The route became such a reliable service that Britain sent official mail headed for Canada via the OMC. The company never hauled "express" shipments—valuables such as payroll, gold, silver and such. That was left up to Wells, Fargo & Co. (yes, the same company as today—note the stagecoach logo).

As successful as the enterprise was, the end of OMC came much too quickly. Three major events merged to end the longest mail route. First, dissension in the company pushed Butterfield out as president in 1860. It's believed other board members wanted to run express and he did not. Butterfield was a natural leader, and so with his removal, morale immediately sagged.

Second, a recently promoted Lt. George Bascom was sent to oversee Indian relations in newly formed, provisional Arizona Territory. In February 1861, he botched a deal with Cochise, killing the Apache leader's brother, thereby causing Cochise to rampage against anyone crossing his territory. Previously, Cochise allowed people to pass through and even had a trading agreement with the way station manager at Apache Pass, near present-day Bowie, Arizona.

The Overland Mail Company strategically connected California's cities of San Francisco and Los Angeles (above), which in the 1850s had a population of fewer than 5,000 residents.

– COURTESY TRUE WEST ARCHIVES –

But the decisive death knell proved to be the Civil War. In March 1861, Confederates shut down the route through Texas, which took eight days to traverse, thus cutting the line in half. Mail and passengers were stopped at the Indian Territory/Texas line.

Many we take for granted today, but Butterfield is responsible for several firsts including:

1. Created stage stations, today's "rest areas" and "truck stops."

2. American history of El Paso originated with the Overland Mail.

3. Los Angeles grew, once connected with the world.

4. Longest stagecoach line in the world under one management.

5. The first truly transcontinental traffic line on the continent.

6. Strict adherence to schedule for the entire period.

7. Drivers assigned to small sections of the route while mail and passengers went through.

8. Unequaled safety record.

John W. Butterfield changed the world back then and left quite a legacy. Today's recuperative rest areas on the Interstates are a direct result of Old John's creative thinking. Later, the Harvey Houses for the trains were undoubtedly influenced by Butterfield. They provided the same service, for the same reasons, as did the OMC. Quite common to us today, but new to pre-Civil War thinking was operating on a regular schedule with coordinated clock management. Not until the OMC insisted on uniform hours from coast to coast did people consider the need for time zones. In 1869, when train travel stretched across America, Butterfield's concept of regular schedules and reliable times was quickly embraced.

John W. Butterfield left a legacy we all enjoy today. ★

Award-winning author **Melody Groves** wrote *Butterfield's Byways: America's First Overland Mail Route Across the West*.

Before John Butterfield's extraordinary transcontinental stage service delivered mail from St. Louis to San Francisco (above) in 25 days, mail sent by ship took nearly four months to arrive in the West's largest city.

– COURTESY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS –